

# THE CRISIS IN CHURCH IN FRANCE

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## CONTENTS :

**M. Combes and the French Catholics.** By Viscount Llandaff.

**The Religious Troubles in France: their Origin and Development.** By Abbot Gasquet.

**The French Associations Bill: its Authors and Objects.**  
By the Rev. John Gerard, S.J.

**The French Clergy and its Calumniators.** By the Rev. John Gerard, S.J.

**Freemasons in France.** By the Rev. Dr. Barry.

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## M. COMBES AND THE FRENCH CATHOLICS

BY THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT LLANDAFF

[The English people pride themselves on their attachment to the principle of Religious Toleration, but when M. Combes began his campaign against the French Religious Orders, English public opinion was generally in sympathy with him. This was because it had been induced by the French anti-clerical press to believe that these religious were not so much an army of devoted men and women engaged in spiritual and charitable works, but rather an organized body of unquiet citizens incessantly conspiring for the overthrow of the Republic. Still there has been all along a considerable section of "liberal opinion," as M. Combes calls it, which has been much scandalized at the cruelty of his procedure, and very sceptical as to the reality of the justification offered for it; and as time has run on and evidence accumulated, these impressions have spread even to many who were originally on his side. Accordingly, being, as it appears, highly sensitive about the judgement of the English people, he felt the necessity of laying his *Apology* before them in the columns of the March number of the *National Review*. It was an *Apology* by no means wanting in cleverness, but as wanting in definite proofs as it was lavish in general assertions. Lord Llandaff replied to it in the April number of the same periodical, and submitted its assertions to the test of facts. It would be a pity if this valuable paper were not preserved in some more permanent form of publication, and by the kind permission of Lord Llandaff and of the Editor of the *National Review*, the Catholic Truth Society is now enabled to add it to their list. In the present edition the revisions made by the author for the use of the *Catholic Union Gazette* have been followed, and some footnotes have been added containing extracts from M. Combes's article, where this seemed desirable for the better understanding of the reply. A letter by the same writer on the effect of the proposed legislation on Protestant communities in France appeared in the *Times* of April 17, and is here appended.]

IN the *National Review* for March, M. Combes expresses his regret that the religious policy of his Government was not appreciated as it deserved to be by a considerable section of Liberal opinion in England.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that

<sup>1</sup> "I could not help observing, during my two and a half years' Premiership, that the religious policy of my Government bewildered a

his British critics have been swayed by British principles and practices, and have ignored the features of the situation in France. The only "British principle" which has led Englishmen to condemn the policy of M. Combes is the principle of justice, fair play, and consideration for political opponents which surely belongs to all countries. M. Combes had, as Minister of France, to administer a highly penal law. He wrested it unfairly from its true spirit and intention; and used it to crush those whom he regarded as his political adversaries, and to root out a religion which he hates. To many Englishmen this appears an odious policy. The Catholic Union of Great Britain, which represents the Catholic body in this country, and comprises as many Liberals as Conservatives, on March 7th unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

"That the Catholic Union of Great Britain has viewed with grief and indignation the measures adopted for some years in France, and still persisted in, which tend to root out the Christian religion from that country; and desires to express heartfelt sympathy with the devoted men and women upon whom the brunt of the persecution has fallen."

A review of the facts will justify the terms of this resolution.

The Law of Associations of July 1, 1901, enacted before M. Combes became Minister, but supported by him in the Legislature, dealt liberally with Civil Associations, but harshly with Religious Congregations. Under that law, considerable section of Liberal opinion in England, and was not appreciated with all the equity which might be desired. I confess I have observed this with regret. . . . Our religious policy was less clearly understood and less impartially judged, because British critics allowed their opinions to be swayed by British principles and British practices, without making due allowance for the different social conditions and political necessities of the two countries."

and the administrative decrees which complete it, all existing unauthorized Congregations were dissolved unless within three months from the date of the law they presented a demand for authorization to the Minister of the Interior. This demand had to be accompanied by copies of their rules, stating the objects for which the Congregation was formed; by a complete inventory of all their property, real and personal; and by an undertaking that the Congregation and its members would submit to the jurisdiction of the ordinary. The Minister, on receipt of this demand, was to ask for the opinion of the Municipal Council of the Commune in which the Congregation was established, and for a report from the Prefect. He was then to submit to Parliament Bills, either for granting or refusing the authorization, which could be granted only by a law passed by both Chambers. Members of an unauthorized Congregation were forbidden to direct an educational establishment of any sort, or to teach in it, under penalties that may amount to 5,000 francs fine, and a year's imprisonment. Congregations that failed to obtain authorization were dissolved and declared unlawful; and mere membership of an unauthorized Congregation involved the same penalties of fines and imprisonment.

The property held by an unauthorized Congregation was to be seized and handed to a liquidator. If any part of that property belonged to one of the members before he joined the Congregation, or had since accrued to him, it was to be restored to him by the liquidator. Any property given to the Congregation was to be restored to the donor or his representatives. All other property held by the Congregation was to be sold, and the proceeds applied to the support of destitute members of the dissolved Congregation.

There is no doubt that this law places Religious Congre-

gations under the control of the French Parliament, who can decide as to their allowance or suppression. But it is equally clear that the decision must be a judicial one, based on inquiry into the merits of each application, not an arbitrary one based on some *a priori* principle. If the Congregations are required to send up their rules, and a full statement of their objects, their numbers, and their pecuniary resources, if the opinion of the Municipal Councils and the Prefects is called for, it must be the intention of the law that these materials shall be laid before the body which has to decide whether the particular Congregation to which they refer is useful or mischievous, and whether it should be authorized or disallowed. During the debates on this law an amendment was proposed (March 12, 1901) suppressing all Congregations. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, then Prime Minister, strenuously resisted this amendment as contrary to the very principle of his law, which was, that authorization of a Congregation must be granted or refused after attentive examination of its rules and its object. He argued that at all periods of the old French monarchy the principle had always been upheld that when a religious Congregation was being formed the State had the right to examine its rules, and to inquire into its object. This principle, he said, was the essential and fundamental basis of his law. At another period of the debates in the Senate fears were expressed by some members that the majority in the Chambers would do precisely what, under M. Combes's guidance, they have since done, namely, reject all demands for authorization of set purpose. M. Waldeck-Rousseau replied that this was too hasty a condemnation of Parliament. "Do you believe," he said, "that French Chambers, having before them rules that are sincere and not full of dissimulation, rules that proclaim objects philosophical, philanthropical, or of social interest, will be animated by

an absolute *parti pris*, and will say, it is a Congregation, we refuse to authorize it?" In this debate mention was made of the Congregation of Picpus, to which attention had been called by the heroic life and death of Father Damien, one of its members, among the lepers of the Sandwich Islands; and M. Waldeck-Rousseau, in an eloquent passage, did justice to the charity and devotion of certain Congregations, and exclaimed: "Neither the interest nor the peril of this debate threaten them." The Senate ordered the *affichage* of this speech; that is to say, it was printed and posted up in every commune in France.

The parliamentary pledges of M. Waldeck-Rousseau were thus communicated and repeated to the electors, and no doubt had considerable influence on the general election which followed soon after. We shall see presently how M. Combes falsified these assurances.

M. Waldeck-Rousseau resigned soon after the passing of the Law of 1901, and M. Combes became President of the Council. Some Religious Congregations, justly estimating the temper of the Chambers, declined to apply for authorization, and were consequently extinguished. Others did apply, and among them some sixty Congregations of men possessing hundreds of houses or establishments in France, in the Colonies, and in foreign countries. Numerous Congregations of women also applied, possessing schools, orphanages, infirmaries, and charitable institutions of various kinds. The feeling of the country does not seem to have been hostile to these Congregations. Out of 1,871 Municipal Councils whose opinion was asked, 1,147 were in favour of the Congregations, 545 were against them, and 179 returned no answer. The Prefects, who are dependent on the Government, were, as might have been expected, hostile to the Congregations. The Prefects consulted as to the establishments in their districts gave in 157 cases

## 6 *M. Combes and the French Catholics*

opinions unfavourable to authorization, in 72 cases favourable opinions, and in 539 cases returned no answer. The silence of a Prefect when the Minister questions is significant. It is fair to conjecture that the desire to please would have prompted the answer that was expected, if the weight of opposing fact had not been too great to overcome. The reasons given by the Prefects opposed to Congregations are instructive. Some allege that the Congregation schools compete too strongly with the public lay schools. In one case the Marianist Brothers had 317 pupils in their school, while the public school had only 18. Others say that the Congregations exercise on the religious population of the rural districts a certain influence which is manifested especially at election times ; or that their teaching is contrary to the spirit of French democracy ; or that the votes given by members of the Congregations are the sole cause that puts the Municipal Council into the hands of the enemies of French institutions. And M. Rabier, who was the member appointed to make a report on the question of authorizing the Congregations, adopts the view of these Prefects and says : "The action of the Congregations is prejudicial to the development of Republican ideas ; the disappearance of these inveterate enemies of our *régime* constitutes the best propaganda we can use against the reaction. . . . We are politicians. Our charge is to accomplish a political work, and to preserve by all means in our power the patrimony of the Republic." These statements of M. Rabier have the merit of frankness. They show that the authorization of the Congregations was to be decided, not in a judicial spirit, not on due consideration of services rendered or of public utility, not in the spirit of the Law of 1901, but on grounds of party spirit and political passion. Because members of a Congregation, who after all are French citizens, are supposed to have voted against

Government candidates, the Congregation is to be dissolved and swept out of the way. Their schools are said to assist the opposition to Republican institutions or ideals; the Congregation must disappear. This is, in a modern dress, the language and spirit of the times when the charge of *in-civisme* was a sure and sufficient passport to the guillotine.

It was in this spirit that M. Combes approached the question. He declined to submit to the Chambers the applications for authorization separately, so that each might be considered on its merits and its particular circumstances. He divided the Congregations of men into three classes, the teaching, the preaching, and the trafficking Congregations, the last category applying especially to the Carthusians, who eke out their slender resources by making and selling Chartreuse—to the delight of many men. He proposed by three Bills to disallow all the Congregations of these classes. M. Rabier, the *rappoiteur*, thought this was an unnecessarily scrupulous arrangement. One Bill should suffice. For, said he in his report, "the question is not so much to inquire if this or that Congregation is more or less unworthy of authorization, but to condemn the Congregation itself in its object and the means which its employs to attain it." Some of the Congregations had rendered signal service to France by missions in the Levant and the Far East, and these services were acknowledged by M. Delcassé; but M. Rabier says: "We cannot think of pausing on such considerations. We shall not inquire if it is true that those Congregations contribute to the development of French language and French influence in foreign countries. The Foreign Secretary so declares in letters which are among the papers. We will not discuss this point." As to the Congregation of Picpus, to which Father Damien belonged, and of which M. Waldeck-Rousseau had

## 8 *M. Combes and the French Catholics*

said that it had nothing to fear, M. Rabier contents himself with citing the opinion of a Prefect that the members of that Order are "hostile to the present form of society and of government." Other Congregations had for their chief business to relieve the poor, and to alleviate every form of human suffering. Of such as these M. Rabier says: "It must not be thought that the services they render are a sufficient tribute for the dangers they present." But, conscious of the total inability of the State to replace this mass of voluntary charitable effort, he adds: "You will refuse authorization, persuaded that the Government, which does not wish to touch these hospitalier-establishments (*établissements-hospitaliers*), so long as the State is not in a position to replace them, will know how to let the establishments in question subsist in their present *modus vivendi*, by a special and limited tolerance." M. Rabier did not explain how Congregations which would be dissolved by non-authorization, whose members would be forbidden to meet, whose property would be seized by a liquidator, could continue their charitable work for the convenience of the State, in what he calls a *modus vivendi*.

M. Combes's policy was successful. The Congregations had prepared their evidence, had collected documents, had hoped to be heard severally by the Chamber, and to have their claims to authorization impartially examined. They were not heard. No inquiry was made into the special circumstances of any one case. It was sufficient that they were all Congregations. M. Combes's three categories were all refused authorization, and ceased to exist. Caligula expressed a pious wish that the Roman people had but one neck, which he might sever at one blow. M. Combes has done better than the Roman tyrant. He forged three necks for all his victims, and severed them all.

A disturbing incident occurred during the progress of

these Bills. M. Waldeck-Rousseau intervened in the debate, and stated that the intention of the Legislature in the law he had himself proposed and carried was, that each demand of authorization should be separately examined and submitted to both Chambers. He further stated that in his opinion the public authorities ought to be very liberal in granting authorizations ; that the refusal of them ought in common justice to be the exception and not the rule ; and, finally, that it was improper to "transform a law of control into a law of exclusion." This speech was simply a reaffirmation of the parliamentary pledges which M. Waldeck-Rousseau had previously given, and a reasonable interpretation of the law itself. M. Combes, who is not a lawyer, pleasantly tells the *National Review* that he "fully acknowledges the intrinsic differences of temperament between himself and M. Waldeck-Rousseau." It is the first time that the difference between justice and injustice has been softened down into a difference of "temperament."

The fate of the female Congregations was swiftly settled in the same manner. With few exceptions, all were refused authorization, without inquiry and without even a plausible excuse. Some of them were contemplative Orders, whose members led cloistered lives, secluded from the world, and having no contact with life outside the convent walls, save through their prayers for France. Others bestowed all their time in the arduous tasks of instructing the ignorant, of feeding the hungry, of nursing the sick, and of relieving the miseries of indigence and infirmity. All alike were doomed to destruction.

It is difficult to realize the magnitude of the ruin wrought by these measures. So far as I know, no complete statistics are available. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, in introducing the Law of 1901, stated that some 75,000

persons had to be dealt with, as members of unauthorized Congregations. M. Combes is said to have received applications for authorization for 12,800 houses or establishments. There were twenty-five teaching Congregations of men, with 1,690 establishments in the list of the unauthorized. Eight of these had no less than 228,523 pupils. The first batch of establishments closed included 750 schools taught by the Christian Brothers, 1,054 schools for girls taught by religious women, and nearly 600 orphanages where the waifs and strays of the country were tended by the sisters. There were numerous establishments where the deaf and dumb are taught, where the blind are educated, where the sick are nursed. No less than 250,000 aged and infirm persons were supported, clothed and served by the charity of the Congregations. All these schools and charitable institutions were erected, maintained, and equipped by voluntary effort, and without any assistance from the public taxes. The cost to the public of replacing them is estimated in millions. The State cannot provide the lay teachers who are to succeed the Religious in sufficient numbers, or with sufficient qualifications.<sup>1</sup> Orders that have existed for centuries, like the Dominicans with their list of celebrated names from St. Thomas Aquinas to Lacordaire, or the Benedictines with their noble traditions of learning, of labour, and of prayer, have been swept out of France. Franciscans, who have followed the precepts of their Founder, and have

<sup>1</sup> “It was not till 1886 that there was a majority of the two Chambers in favour of secularizing the *personnel* of our public schools. Even then the Legislature was compelled, owing to the lack of lay school-masters and the want of money, to accord a delay of ten years to this reform. This term expired more than ten years ago, but active as I have been in continuing the process, there are several hundred schools still to be secularized. . . . This policy will be continued by others whenever their resources enable them to replace the Religious Orders, which is not the case at present.”

taught the fraternity, not of M. Combes, but of the Gospel, have disappeared with their missions in China, Abyssinia, Turkey, and the Holy Land. The suppression of these missionary Congregations is described by M. Leroy-Beaulieu (who is not a "Clerical") in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* as a "policy of national suicide." Thousands of men and women have been turned out of the homes where their lives were devoted to prayer and works of charity. Many were of advanced age, and ill-fitted to begin life afresh in the menial occupations to which their poverty compelled them to resort. Many were driven into exile, for M. Combes allowed them no peace in France. In April, 1903, he issued a circular to the French Bishops, directing them not to allow ex-Congregationists to preach in any of the churches of their diocese. In one case two ladies of one family, turned out of their convent, obtained dispensation from their vows, and went to live in their father's house. Unhappily they began to busy themselves in visiting the poor, and thereupon they received a visit from a Commissary of Police, who informed them that two ex-Congregationists living together formed a "Congregation," and that this was against the law. I pass over the painful scenes which occurred in carrying out this legislation, when soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent to expel peaceful women from the homes where they had lived for years in the service of God and of their neighbour. Some officers resigned their commissions rather than assist in this hateful task ; and M. Combes describes this recoil of outraged consciences as an "unheard-of act of insubordination."

It might interest English readers to say a word about the Benedictine College of Douai, which had existed since 1625, and had been enlarged, maintained and equipped by English men and English money. It was endeared to English Catholics as a place where they could obtain

*COLLEGE CHRISTI REGIS S.J.*  
*LIB. BIB. TORONTO*

Catholic education during the period when the penal laws made such education difficult or impossible in England. It was exempted, as being English property, from the revolutionary laws of 1790 and March, 1793. When war had broken out between England and France, its members were arrested as alien enemies, and its property was sequestered. After the treaty of Paris the Benedictines returned to Douai, and so much of their former property as had not been sold was administered for their benefit by a Government Board. That state of things continued until M. Combes's liquidator appeared at their gates, evicted them from their College, and seized or sold all their real and personal property. Up to this moment they have not received one penny of compensation.

If we examine the reasons given by M. Combes to the *National Review* to justify all this havoc, what do we find? We are told that the teaching Orders are "unfit trainers of free citizens"; that their "educational system is incompatible with our ideals"; and that "they are pernicious instruments of that monstrous theocratic doctrine which is fatal to our whole social and political conception, of which the fundamental axiom is, the absolute independence of the State of all dogma, and its recognized supremacy over every religious communion."<sup>1</sup> These are tall words.

<sup>1</sup> "The policy pursued by me during the last two years and a half is simply the policy propounded by Gambetta, of whom Waldeck-Rousseau was a disciple. It is the policy of combating clericalism, the born enemy of the Republic. . . . Like Jules Ferry, I have once and for all withdrawn the youth of France from an educational system which is incompatible with our ideals. . . . In the eyes of the Republican majority (the Law of 1901) involved the expulsion of the teaching, preaching, and commercial Orders, and was in fact a law of social defence. The first were regarded as unfit trainers of free citizens. The second not only deprived the secular clergy of one of their principal functions, but moreover on the pretext of preaching they conducted a veritable campaign against Liberalism, while the commercial Orders were regarded as degrading the religious idea by their ignoble and

Reduced to plainer English, they appear to mean that because the Congregations teach French children to say their prayers, to fear God, or to obey the ten commandments, they are violating the fundamental axiom of the modern French State. The “free citizens” of France do not appear to share M. Combes’s view, for he admits that as soon as the *Loi Falloux*<sup>1</sup> gave liberty of teaching in France, the Congregations founded schools all over the country (at no cost to the public, but by voluntary efforts), increased the number of their pupils year by year, and not only succeeded in “killing lay competition,” but also succeeded in “invading the public schools,” into which clerical school-masters were introduced by the Communes themselves, as soon as the law allowed them to do so. If, in claiming for the State “supremacy over every religious communion,” M. Combes means that the State is entitled to dictate to its citizens what and how much they may believe, and to control not only their outward acts, but the inward convictions of their soul, that is a claim which hardly requires refutation. If he only means that the members of every religious communion must obey the law, however unjust, or bear the penalty, that is a mere truism. But what law have the Congregations failed to obey? M. Combes says “they openly conspired with the monarchical factions to compass the ruin of our institutions.” If this means a conspiracy, which was a breach of the law, when was it committed? Why was it not prosecuted under one of the huckstering spirit. . . . In our eyes the Orders are not only superfluous excrescences on a self-sufficing faith; they are also pernicious instruments of that monstrous theocratic doctrine which is fatal to our whole social and political conception, of which the fundamental axiom is the absolute independence of the State of all dogma, and its recognized supremacy over every religious communion. Such is the doctrine of the French Revolution of which the French Republic glories in being the heir.”

<sup>1</sup> The *Loi Falloux*, passed in 1825, was the law under which liberty of teaching was sanctioned throughout France.

many provisions of the Penal Code which deal with such offences? This, again, is one of those sweeping assertions to which M. Combes is partial, and which can only be met by a general denial. He makes this charge against all the Congregations—male and female—who were refused authorization—among whom, be it observed, the Jesuits and Assumptionists are not included, since neither of them applied for it. To suggest that communities of nuns, devoting their lives, and all the energies of their mind and heart, to training peasant girls in remote country districts, entered into a conspiracy with monarchical factions, is grotesque. If M. Combes could be cross-examined it would probably turn out that the slender foundation of fact underlying this statement would be that some members of some Congregations played a part in an electoral contest against some ultra-Republican candidate, as they had a perfect right to do. Again, M. Combes argues in a series of *non sequiturs*, that the Concordat is silent as regards Religious Orders; therefore, they are outside the Concordat, and outside the officially recognized Catholic Church, which was deliberately limited by the text of the Concordat; therefore their existence was a “violation of the Concordat.” It is true that the Concordat does not expressly mention Religious Orders, and therefore neither authorizes nor condemns them expressly. But the 1st Article of the Concordat provides that the “Catholic religion shall be freely exercised in France.” The free exercise of the Catholic religion involves the foundation of Religious Orders, which are an important part of its full development. The collection of documents relative to the negotiation of the Concordat, made by Count Boulay de la Muerthe, shows that the First Consul regarded Religious Orders as purely religious institutions, which should owe their existence to the initiative of the Holy See, without

any concurrence of the Civil Law. The record of the last conference between the negotiators of the Concordat, held in Joseph Bonaparte's hotel, states that several corrections were made in the draft treaty, one of which was to omit all mention of monasteries, and to make of that matter only the subject of a Brief, if the Pope should think fit. Moreover, Bonaparte himself, so far from treating Congregations as violations of the Concordat, or even of the Organic Articles, established the Christian Brothers as teachers of schools at Rheims, Chartres, Lyons, and other places in 1802; he received in 1803 a deputation of Oratorians and their pupils at Dammartin, and told the Director, in answer to an address, that his scholars "were in good hands"; and, as M. Combes admits, he entrusted the Sulpicians with the task of training candidates for Orders in the restored seminaries.

The real truth is that M. Combes attacked the Congregations because their activity and their popularity rendered them a most efficient instrument for keeping alive religion in France, and it was M. Combes's ambition to achieve "the same salutary work as had been accomplished by the Revolution" in 1793, when altars were overthrown and churches made desolate.<sup>1</sup> He has sought to attain a bad end by bad means.

Having demolished the Religious Orders, M. Combes next turned his attention to the Secular Clergy. His article in the *National Review* throws an unexpected light on this matter.<sup>2</sup> He tells us that he and most of his

<sup>1</sup> "In applying the Law of Associations, M. Waldeck-Rousseau's successor merely translated into action the aspirations of the Republican party. . . . It would have been an abandonment of the traditional policy of the Republic and a treason to the party, not to have achieved the same salutary work as had been accomplished 110 years before"—that is, during the Terror.

<sup>2</sup> "When I formed my Cabinet in June, 1902, we deliberately took our stand on the basis of the Concordat. Not that I personally was

colleagues were always in favour of the separation of Church and State, but they thought it "inopportune" to put forward any proposal of that kind. On the contrary, they "deliberately took their stand on the basis of the Concordat"; that is, they deliberately took a course which must have led the Secular Clergy to believe that their position in the State, which depended on the Concordat, was secure. M. Combes tells us that he expected the Secular Clergy would, from sordid motives, "view the expulsion of the Monastic Orders with equanimity." But all the while, as he tells us, he intended, as soon as public opinion was prepared, to "complete the work of emancipating lay society" by divorcing the State from the Church. That is to say, while his Parliamentary conduct was so shaped as to make the Secular Clergy helpful, or at least indifferent, to the attack on the Regulars, he all the time kept hidden, as it were up his sleeve, the knife he intended to apply to their own throat as soon as the Regulars were got rid of.

Throughout his article M. Combes insists on treating the Organic Articles as part and parcel of the Concordat. This is historically untenable. The Concordat was negotiated at great length, and with many dramatic incidents, between the representatives of the Holy See and of the First Consul. It was finally settled and signed in Paris on July 15, 1801 (26 Messidor, An. IX.). The ratifications by the Pope and Bonaparte were exchanged in

opposed to the separation of Church and State. On the contrary I professed that principle, as did likewise the majority of my colleagues; and on this point we were in harmony with the Republican party, which has always regarded this divorce as the logical completion of the work of emancipating lay society from clerical control. But we all felt that it would be inopportune and imprudent to include so momentous a measure in the Ministerial programme, as public opinion had not been adequately prepared for it. Nevertheless I intended to pave the way for that great reform."

Paris on September 10, 1801. But it was not published by the French Government till nine months after. In that interval Bonaparte, acting probably under the advice of Talleyrand, submitted to the Legislature the so-called Organic Articles of the Convention of 1801. These were decreed by the Corps Législatif on April 8, 1802 (18 Germinal, An. X.), and were published, together with the Concordat, as the law of that date, on Easter Day (April 18), 1802.

The Pope had never seen the Organic Articles until they were published. As soon as they came to his knowledge he protested against them. In an allocution to the College of Cardinals he described them as contrary to the Catholic religion, and declared that he had no share in them. This allocution was inserted in the *Moniteur* of the 19th Prairial, An. X. The Pope renewed his protest in 1809, and neither he nor any of his successors have assented to these Articles as part of the treaty between the Holy See and France.

It is inconceivable that they should have done so: for the Articles are in some points in contradiction with Catholic doctrine and discipline; in others they contradict the Concordat itself. There are 77 of them which relate to the Catholic Church: but there are 44 more, which relate exclusively to the Protestant Churches in France; and it cannot be suggested that these could have formed part of an agreement between the Pope and the French Government.

The Organic Articles may therefore be part of the law of France, but they cannot in any way bind the Holy See.

All M. Combes's charges against the Pope of breaches of the Concordat are in reality based on acts of the Holy See which appear to him to conflict with one or other of the Organic Articles. There is not a syllable in the Concordat empowering archbishops to deal with complaints of the

lower clergy against their suffragans, nor forbidding the Nuncio from interfering in the affairs of the Church in France, nor preventing a bishop from leaving his see without the leave of the Minister of Public Worship.<sup>1</sup> Those matters are dealt with in the Fifteenth, Second and Twenty-eighth Organic Articles. M. Combes has not adduced, and cannot adduce, any instance in which the Holy See has failed to observe the stipulations of the only contract which binds it, namely the Concordat itself. With regard to the French bishops and clergy, M. Combes has recourse to the sweeping assertions in which he delights: "not a single obligation contracted by them which has not been systematically violated"; "the pulpits have been centres of sedition against the Republican Government." When he condescends to particular instances we see at once the futility of his complaints. The Catholic Hierarchy, he says, "participated in the reactionary movements of May 24, 1874, and May 16, 1877"; and their action roused Gambetta and "evoked his immortal phrase, '*Le Clericalisme voilà l'ennemi!*'" In May, 1877, there was a strong movement of opinion among French Catholics against the treatment of the Pope by the Italian Government, and many hot speeches were made by prominent laymen. One bishop, the Bishop of Nevers, took public

<sup>1</sup> "According to the Concordat, archbishops possess the right of dealing with the complaints of the lower clergy against their suffragans. Here again the Pope intervenes and insists that such cases shall be decided by his own tribunals in Rome. . . . The Bishops of Dijon and Laval . . . were summoned to Rome for trial, under penalty of immediate suspension. The Papal Nuncio, misconceiving the duties of an ambassador, and in violation of that article of the Concordat which forbids the Papal representative to interfere with the internal affairs of the Church of France, had constituted himself the agent for conveying the menace of the Vatican to the Bishop of Dijon, whom he had enjoined on behalf of the Holy See to abstain from every episcopal function. According to the Concordat the two prelates could not repair to Rome without the leave of the Minister of Public Worship. Under the circumstances this permission was very naturally refused,"

action. He addressed a circular to the civil functionaries in his diocese asking them to join in manifesting against the Italian policy. This may have been wise or unwise, in good taste or the reverse ; but it was not seditious, or criminal, or a breach of any law. It was quite within the bishop's rights as a French citizen. Gambetta, in the speech alluded to by M. Combes, in which he uttered his war cry against "Clericalism," asserted without any proof that all the French bishops and clergy thought and felt with the Bishop of Nevers ; and, not content with attacking the clergy, he said that the French Senate was "the citadel, the refuge, and the lair of clericalism." In the same debate the Prime Minister, M. Jules Simon (certainly no clerical), professed "for the Catholic religion and for the clergy a profound and sincere respect." As for May, 1874, it was the occasion of a defeat of the Duc de Broglie's Ministry by a chance combination of Royalists, Bonapartists and ultra-Liberals. I am not aware that any bishop or priest was responsible for it ; and if they had been, it would not advance M. Combes's argument. It is very probable that the French clergy, like the rest of the nation, are divided into Royalists, Bonapartists and Republicans ; it is possible that some of them actively support their opinions ; but it is inconsistent with elementary ideas of liberty that this should be made the ground for vindictive and penal legislation against them.

The Organic Articles no doubt created a situation of much difficulty for the French clergy, because they were in conflict with the law of the Church. Indeed, it is the Organic Articles themselves that are a violation of the Concordat. Lanfrey describes the method by which they were tacked on to the treaty as a "disloyal surprise." It was hardly possible that occasions of friction and difference should not arise between the priesthood and the State ; and great tact

and discretion were necessary to make the machinery run smoothly. Take the case of the Bishops of Laval and Dijon. Accusations were made against them, and public feeling was roused in their dioceses. Candidates for the priesthood refused to receive ordination from one of them. I do not know what the charges against them were. Rome has never revealed them. M. Combes takes upon himself to specify them. How could the Pope, as head of the Church, responsible for its good government, and having jurisdiction to suspend or deprive, avoid taking cognizance of such cases, or exercise his jurisdiction, except by summoning the bishops to answer these charges at Rome? It is quite true that by the Organic Articles bishops can only leave their diocese by permission of the Government. Surely any Government with the slightest regard for the well-being of the Church would at once have granted that permission, and have urged the bishops to clear themselves if they could. A Government that wished to create scandal and strife would refuse permission; and this is what M. Combes's Government "very naturally" did. What was the consequence? The bishops, nevertheless, went to Rome, the only tribunal to which they could go. M. Combes should have remembered what Napoleon himself, the most despotic of rulers, once said, "The empire of the law must be strenuously stopped at the limits where the empire of conscience begins." But the Government took no steps to punish this disregard of the Organic Articles by the bishops. On the contrary, they refused to accept their resignation, and insisted on maintaining them in their sees, so as, if possible, to still further embroil the matter.

The only other specific instance mentioned by M. Combes of illegal action by the State clergy is the fact that the Episcopacy addressed to the President of the Republic a "collective declaration," urging him to repudiate the action

of his Ministers in dissolving the Congregations. He says this was "in defiance of the Concordat which forbids concerted action." Now the Concordat does not contain a syllable on the subject. The Fourth Organic Article does enact that "No national or metropolitan council, no diocesan synod, no deliberative assembly shall be held without the express permission of the Government." But even this Article, which is one of the fetters by which Bonaparte sought to bind the Church, can hardly be twisted into meaning that several bishops may not join in signing a petition to the chief of the State. As to the general allegations of disobedience to the law by the bishops, it is sufficient to ask, Where is the evidence? What steps have ever been taken by French Governments against bishops or clergy? The Penal Code bristles with enactments against ecclesiastics who use their spiritual office for secular ends, or for the criticism or censure of any act of the public authorities. The Sixth Organic Article gives an appeal, not to ordinary judicial tribunals, but to a body dependent on Government—the Council of State—against all ecclesiastics for cases of abuse; and "abuse" is defined to mean any excess of power or disobedience to the law, or invasion of the liberties of the Gallican Church, or any proceeding which may disturb the conscience of citizens, or give public scandal. If the records of the Courts and of the Council of State are searched, it will be found that there are very few, if any, instances in the lapse of a century in which it has been shown that any members of the French Episcopacy or clergy have misused their spiritual office for temporal objects.

The Papal protest against M. Loubet's visit to the King of Italy in Rome is another topic urged by M. Combes, apparently as a reason for the proposal to separate Church and State in France. M. Loubet came to Rome as the

representative of France, the “eldest daughter of the Church.” His visit to the King of Italy was a condonation by France of the seizure of Rome by the Piedmontese, and was unaccompanied by the slightest courtesy shown to the dispossessed Sovereign of Rome. The seizure of Rome was an act of pure undisguised violence, unprovoked by any wrong done, not even preceded by a state of war, carried out by the strong against the weak, by an ambitious new monarchy against one of the oldest and most legitimate sovereignties in Europe. It was the most glaring violation of the public law of Europe which had occurred since the partition of Poland, or since the attacks against the Papal States by revolutionary France. Speaking of those attacks in the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt stigmatized as a crime the seizure of Avignon, which was “separated from its lawful sovereign, with whom not even the pretence of quarrel existed”; and described the subversion of the Papal authority by Joseph Bonaparte as “a transaction accompanied by outrages and insults towards the pious and venerable Pontiff (in spite of the sanctity of his age and the unsullied purity of his character), which even to a Protestant seemed hardly short of the guilt of sacrilege.” The Emperor of Austria, although he is on terms of political alliance with the King of Italy, has consistently recognized the claims that undeserved misfortune has upon sympathy, and the majesty of Right overborne by Force. He has always declined to visit Rome officially under its new rulers. M. Loubet, however, thought differently from Mr. Pitt and the Emperor of Austria; and because the Pope made a temperate protest against his action, M. Combes calls this an “insult” to France.

M. Combes proposed and laid before the Chambers a law for the abolition of the Concordat; but his Ministry fell before it was discussed. His successors have now

brought forward a Bill with the same object, a little less drastic than M. Combes's proposal, but sufficient for the purpose. The Concordat is to be abrogated. All subventions by the State for religious objects, such as salaries to bishops, priests, Protestant ministers, Jewish rabbis, are to cease. All buildings used for worship (cathedrals, churches, chapels, synagogues) and for the housing of the ministers of religion are declared to be the property of the State or of the Communes. The use of these buildings is granted to the different denominations for two years free of charge; for ten years more at a fixed rate on a repairing lease. After that period it is optional with the State or the Communes to charge what rent they please, or to turn these buildings to other purposes. We may live to see the venerable shrines of Rheims or of Chartres turned into music halls; and *Notre Dame* once more devoted to the cult of the "Goddess of Reason." The denominations can only deal with the State or the Communes by forming "associations" for the exclusive purpose of carrying on a particular form of worship. These associations cannot extend the field of their operations beyond ten Departments; and they are only allowed to have an income so strictly limited that it will hardly be possible for them to maintain things in their present state, and impossible for them to undertake any church extensions. Moreover, there are clauses on what is called the "police of worship," by which the freedom of clergymen in the exercise of their ministry is seriously hampered. The chief protests against this Bill have come from the Protestants and the Jews. The Central Council of the Reformed Churches of France has addressed a memorandum against the Bill to the Government. They claim that the temples, chapels, and presbyteries used by them shall remain the property of the denomination. They point out that a central fund, and

not one limited to ten Departments, is necessary if they are to exist ; and that general synods, including the whole of France, are part of their religious system. The Chief Rabbi, Mr. Lehmann, has addressed a letter to the *Siècle*, in which he protests against the confiscation of churches mostly built by contributions from the congregation ; and against the withdrawal of all assistance from the Budget of public worship.

“ What we want [he concludes] is that places of worship should belong to those who have built them and pray in them ; that each religious denomination should preserve the form of organization which is most in conformity with its traditions and aspirations ; Catholicism, its imposing and majestic hierarchy ; Protestantism, its presbyterian worship and national synod ; Judaism, its central association, with its material and moral action exercised for the benefit of French Judaism.”

These pronouncements are of interest as showing that all denominations are equally struck at by the proposed measure. It is not Catholicity only, but all religion, that these “heirs of the French Revolution” wish to destroy. Indeed, we were expressly assured long ago by M. Louis Blanc, whose authority on the subject is unquestionable, that “We understand by Clericalism, not only Catholicism, but all religion, and all religiosity, whatever it may be.” And many passages could be cited from the Revolutionary Press to show that the heirs of the Revolution hold religious Protestants in even greater abhorrence than Catholics.

There is another interesting chapter of M. Combes’s anti-religious crusade upon which he is unaccountably silent in the *National Review*, and that is the system of delation and *espionnage* organized by his Government. General André was to “purify” the army. Captain Mollin,

of the War Office, was selected to manage the details. He sent lists of officers who were down for promotion to the Grand Orient Lodge of Freemasons, and requested information about them. The Grand Orient collected "notes" on these officers, penned by spies, mostly Freemasons, in all parts of France. These "notes" obtained publicity, chiefly through M. de Villeneuve, a deputy. They are melancholy reading. Some officers are reported as "opposed to the Government." Of another it is said that he "calumniates the Government, the Freemasons and free-thinkers." Of others it is enough to bar their promotion either that he "seems reactionary"; or that he is "careful not to let people know what he thinks, but is most probably an *arrieriste*"; or even that he is "connected with a family which caused the defeat of socialists at a municipal election"; or that he "publicly criticises the Law of Associations, and has his money invested in Belgium." But the great majority of the "notes" turn upon the religious tendencies of the officers. It is made a crime in an officer that he goes regularly to church; that he sends his children to religious schools or seminaries; or even that his wife is a church-goer. One officer spends Sunday "teaching his children the catechism"; and another who had "two bishops at his wedding, and visits an archbishop," is noted as specially dangerous; he must not only be debarred from promotion, but watched. One officer gets promotion in spite of the unfavourable "note." The Grand Orient angrily remonstrates; and Captain Mollin humbly apologizes, and says in excuse that Madame Waldeck-Rousseau had insisted on the promotion. In a word, any man who professes religion himself, or who values it for his wife and his children, is shut out from advancement in his profession, and from employment by the State. He is tainted with "religiosity" or "clericalism";

down with him! This infamous system, degrading to the army, and degrading to the Government that used it, recalls some of the most odious practices of 1793, of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and of Fouquier-Tinville. It was feebly defended in the French Chambers. M. Combes said it was necessary to have informers as "republican agents." It would have been interesting to the readers of the *National Review* to know what he thinks of the system now. But he may rest assured that it forms one of the reasons why his policy does not recommend itself to English opinion.

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## PROTESTANT COMMUNITIES IN FRANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *TIMES*.

SIR,—I think that Englishmen do not fully realize the effect which the proposed legislation on the separation of Church and State in France will have on Protestants in that country. They are not a numerous body. In 1872, the last occasion when a religious census was taken, they numbered 650,000. They are very unequally distributed throughout France. In 35 departments there were less than 1,000. In 23 departments the numbers ranged from 1,000 to 3,000; in 16 other departments from 4,000 to 10,000; and in 12 departments from 10,000 to 47,000. Only one department had more than 100,000. Though few in numbers, they are conspicuous for order, morality and strenuous piety. Since 1802 they have lived under the system established by Bonaparte in the Organic Articles of that year. That system was accepted by them as an improvement after the storm of destruction

which had swept away the Protestant churches during the dark period following 1793, but it was not an ideal system. Bonaparte took care to put the Protestant, as well as the Catholic, Church under the control of the State. By the Organic Articles no doctrinal decision and no formulary could be published, or taught, without the leave of the Government. No change in discipline could take place without a similar authorization. The election of elders, or lay members of the consistory which managed the affairs of each church, was no longer free, but was limited to the citizens who paid most direct taxes. The presidency of a consistory was not conferred by free election, but was given to the oldest pastor or minister. Synods were to consist of five consistorial churches, and were composed of the pastor and one elder from each church. Synods could meet only with the permission of the Government, in the presence of the prefect, and under such hampering regulations that in fact they rarely met. The Organic Articles were silent as to national synods, and it was not until 1871 that the Reformed Church of France obtained from M. Thiers a decree which authorized the meeting of national synods, consisting of delegates from the provincial or consistorial synods. On the other hand, by the Organic Articles, French Protestants obtained freedom of public worship, the right to receive endowments for the support of ministers and the expenses of their churches, and salaries for their ministers. The Organic Articles recognized two classes of French Protestants—the Calvinistic branch, or Reformed Churches of France, and the Lutheran branch, or Churches of the Confession of Augsburg. The Reformed Churches received from the State, according to the last published return, a sum of 1,206,600 f. in payment of ministers' stipends. More than two-thirds of these stipends amount only to 1,800 f. a year. The

remainder are somewhat higher, but none exceed 3,000 f. Small as these stipends are, they enable the Reformed Church to exist in many districts where the congregation would be unable to support a minister. This branch of the Protestant Church has at present the use of 887 temples and oratories; but of this number only half (or 444) belong to the consistories and presbyterian councils. The remainder either belong to the Communes, to the State, or to private individuals, or the title to them is disputed. There are also 162 presbyteries or manses used by the ministers of this branch. Of these only 59 belong to consistories or presbyteral councils; the remainder belong to the Communes or the State.

In the Lutheran branch of the French Protestant Church there are 62 ministers receiving from the State salaries which range from 1,800 f. to 3,000 f., and amount in all to 127,000 f. I have no information as to the churches or parsonages used by this branch, which has lost three-fourths of its members by the separation of Alsace from France.

Now the proposed law for the separation of Church and State which is still before the Chamber of Deputies suppresses at one blow all payments to the ministers of both the Calvinistic and the Lutheran persuasions. That of itself is a serious injury to communities widely scattered, and by no means wealthy. Then the churches, oratories and presbyteries or manses belonging to the Commune or the State are to be left to the use and enjoyment of religious denominations for two years only free of rent, and for a further period of ten years in the case of churches, and of five years in the case of presbyteries at a fixed rent. After that time the State and the Communes are free to demand what rent they please, or to devote the buildings to other uses. It should

be remembered that the ownership of the Communes and the State arises in most cases from their having contributed the site for the churches or presbyteries, and that the cost of building, generally far in excess of the value of the site, has been largely defrayed by voluntary contributions. It will be a grievous hardship to many of the Protestant congregations throughout France to be deprived of their churches and presbyteries unless they submit to such terms as the Communes or the State may choose to impose. Neither State nor Communes are friendly landlords. Moreover, the proposed law creates a new set of bodies who are to have the management and control of all the temporal affairs of the Protestant Churches. "Associations" are to be formed, having for their exclusive object the exercise of some form of worship. They are to be the lessees of the churches and presbyteries from the Communes and the State. They are to receive pew rents, offertory moneys, burial and marriage fees. They may form unions with a central direction. They have limited powers of creating reserve funds. These enactments seem an unnecessary interference with the system now prevailing, under which the consistories and the presbyteral councils manage the receipts and expenditure for purposes of worship in the several churches. They also interfere with an important part of the Protestant organization—namely, the General Synod, consisting of deputies from the provincial synods. The General Synod not only has the duty of maintaining evangelical principles and discipline in the local churches, but also provides a central fund from which assistance is given to the cost of worship in the more needy localities.

The proposed law is niggardly and even cruel in its treatment of the ministers who now receive salaries from the State. These men have gone through a course of study in the public seminaries, have taken degrees, have given up

every other calling in life, in order to enter upon a career to which they were drawn by higher motives, but in which they were assured by the law of their country of a very modest stipend during their lives and of pensions for their widows. The proposal is that, if they have been for twenty-five years occupied in functions remunerated by public moneys, they are to have a life-pension equal to half their salary, but in no case exceeding 1,200 f., or £48. If their term of service is less than twenty-five years, they are to receive their full salary for the first year after the passing of the law, two-thirds of their salary for the second year, one-half for the third year, and one-third for the fourth year, after which the pension ceases.

The General Council of the Reformed Churches of France in November last addressed a temperate and able memorandum to the Prime Minister. They declare that, although the Reformed Churches do not ask for the separation of Church and State, they profess no principle opposed to separation, but are unanimous in demanding that liberty of conscience and of worship be fully guaranteed, and that the law on the "police of worship" shall in no way interfere with their organization or the fulfilment of their duties. They affirm with regret that the proposed law will, unless it is modified, endanger in the most serious way their existence and their development. They proceed to state the objections which I have just summarized.

I apologize for the length of this letter. It is only by setting forth the details of the ecclesiastical legislation proposed in France that it becomes possible to realize the malignant hostility to every form of Christianity exhibited by the predominant party in the French Legislature.

Yours, &c.,

LLANDAFF.

NOTE.

The Memorandum of the General Council of Reformed Churches in France referred to in the above letter, was dated November 27, 1904, and dealt with the Bill for the Separation of Church and State, presented by M. Combes on November 10, 1904. The Bill presented by M. Combes's successors, and now under discussion in the Chamber of Deputies, was not settled till March 4, 1905 ; but, save in one respect, the criticisms of the General Council are applicable to the later Bill as well as that of M. Combes. Both Bills repeal the Organic Articles of 1802, and suppress all salaries and grants in aid to Protestant Ministers and Churches. With regard to religious edifices, churches, chapels, and presbyteries, M. Combes's Bill is more favourable to Protestant communities than the Bill of his successors ; and it proposed a system of pensions for ministers now receiving salaries from the State, which was less illiberal than the system proposed by the Bill of 1905. It is obvious, therefore, that the objections raised by the General Council to M. Combes's Bill on all the above matters apply still more strongly to the present Bill.

In one respect M. Combes's Bill was less favourable than the Bill of 1905, for it limited the area over which unions of Associations could be formed to one French Department ; while the later Bill allows Unions of Associations without any limit of area, and with a central direction. That is an improvement so far as it goes, but it does not affect or lessen the objection to the provisions concerning salaries, ecclesiastical buildings, pensions, and administration of local presbyteral affairs. In the above letter the comments of the General Council on the limitation of the area of a Union have accordingly been omitted, as no

longer applicable, while the comments on other matters have been stated.

It must not be supposed that a Central Union of Associations will be regarded by the French Protestants as equivalent to a General Synod. The Central Union is itself to be an Association subject to the Law of July, 1901. It must lodge a declaration with the Prefect stating the seat or headquarters of the Union, its rules, and the name, profession and domicile of all those who have any share in its direction or government. Its income appears to consist only of the subscriptions of its members, which are strictly limited in amount. It resembles a board of directors of a company with no shares. The General Synod, on the other hand, is not a permanent body with fixed directors or administrators. It is a freely-elected assembly of delegates from each provincial Synod, these provincial Synods being themselves composed of persons elected by the several churches in the province.

It is worth noting that by a Law of March 26, 1852, there was created a Central Council of the Reformed Churches of France, established in Paris, and charged with the management of all questions of general interest committed to it by the Government, or by the Churches. It very much resembled what the Central Union of Associations under the Bill of this year will be. Yet French Protestants were never content with this Central Council, and never ceased to press for the recognition of General Synods, which they obtained at last in 1871.

# THE RELIGIOUS TROUBLES IN FRANCE : THEIR ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

BY THE RIGHT REV. ABBOT GASQUET, O.S.B.

IT has been usual, I believe, to devote the inaugural address at the Conferences of this Society to some subject of immediate interest to Catholics. Supposing this to be so, I make no apology for bringing before you this evening some considerations upon the religious condition of France and the persecuting policy of those now in power in that country. Not only is the subject important in itself, calling for our sympathetic interest ; but we have, I think, a right to complain that the English press generally has been so ill-informed, or, what is the same thing, has kept us so very much in the dark as to what has really taken place across the Channel, and as to the great principles at issue in the struggle. The consequence is that the nation has a very inadequate notion of contemporary events which would certainly shock its profound religious sense and its equally deep sense of justice and fair dealing.

Only the other day I was speaking with one who for many years had been on the staff of one of our great London daily papers : he is an Englishman of unusually acute intelligence and sound judgement, and his views about the troubles which are afflicting France had been exclusively derived from the accounts which had appeared in the ordinary journals. As far as he had grasped the situation at all, the whole difficulty appeared most simple : it lay in the refusal of the regular Orders to adapt themselves to a very reasonable law, and in the illegal position taken up by most of the bishops in supporting them in their unreason-

<sup>1</sup> The Inaugural Address at the Catholic Conference, Liverpool, 1903.

able disobedience. It was difficult to make him credit my assertion that the only scheme to regularize religious associations which had been proposed by the French Government was really one of dissolution, accompanied by the seizure of all the property of such religious bodies, or "liquidation" of their goods, as it is euphemistically called. "But this," he exclaimed, when he had at length been brought to understand the true position, "this is an injustice compared with which the injustice of the Dreyfus affair, which stirred the heart of the English nation to its very depths, was as nothing." Quite so; and it is not, we may be sure, the sense of the English nation that is wanting; but a knowledge of the facts of the case. It is for this reason that I propose to lay before you this evening—although I am speaking to an audience that no doubt has knowledge and consequently sympathy—some of the main points in the present situation. Let us perhaps hope that what we say here may be passed on to others and may help to open their eyes; though this may be difficult and take time, and much telling. "The great difficulty," says Ruskin, "is to open men's eyes. To touch their feelings and break their hearts is easy: the difficulty is to break their heads" and let the light in.

To understand the situation rightly it is necessary to recognize the principles at issue; and to grasp these effectively we must go back a long way—to the year 1789. Between religion and the world, or, let us say, between the Church and the State, history teaches us—even if we had not Our Lord's own forecast of the relations to be expected—that there must at times arise difficulties more or less grave. Three only solutions of the relation between them are possible: (1) there may be a national religion, (2) or a Concordat between the Holy See and the State, or (3) complete separation. All these three solutions have been tried in France since the year 1789.

The first—the *nationalization* of the Church—was tried in the revolutionary period of 1790–1794 and, of course, it failed utterly for obvious reasons. The civil constitution of the clergy was drawn up in full accord with the principles of the Revolution then in vogue; and as France had then professedly gone back to the pagan world for its patterns and its models, the official conception of religion derived therefrom

was, that it was a function of the State. There was to be a *pontifex* as there was to be a *consul*, and the priest was to be a moral officer, a preaching magistrate, a *fonctionnaire* with a State licence and a State status, set apart to work in the State department of religion. The scheme failed mainly because the designers took no account of the fact that all real religion was essentially something apart from the natural order: and inasmuch as it was supernatural it could not be ultimately regulated by the power of the Crown, or shaped to accord with every policy of State, or even permanently controlled by any secular authority. All history teaches us plainly that religion must exist, and always has existed, only in so far as it corresponds to a need of humanity which the State has no power to satisfy. If in 1790 the Catholic Church could have allowed itself to be absorbed into the State in the way proposed, it would have lost its vital principle. It would have ceased to be the Catholic Church. "It would have ceased to be a faith, or indeed even a thought or sentiment, and have become a mere fashion."

"From 1790-1795," says that acute writer and eminent member of the Académie Française M. Emile Faguet, "the clergy and the *Constituants* were entirely wrong in their idea of a Church." They were wrong precisely because they did not understand that religion has to do with 'country' and not with government, and that the functions of the Government are not the same as those of 'the country.' The Catholic religion, precisely because it is Catholic, is universal and is the same religion existing in all countries. It assumes national characteristics, it is true, in different countries; is Spanish in Spain, English in England, and Italian in Italy; but it is the same religion in all countries, and so, if it be Catholic, it cannot be nationalized or fashionéd and formed by any government; it cannot be cast into any one stereotyped mould by any secular power; it can never be made an official department of any one State.

The third solution—separation of Church and State—was tried in A.D. 1795. The idea had indeed always been prominent during the period of the Revolution, but when the actual separation came the religious *régime* of the *Directoire* lasted only two and a half years. After a brief period for consideration and experiment, Napoleon I. in

1801 entered into the *Concordat* with Pius VII. by which the government of the Church is still supposed to be regulated. Some such agreement between the Pope and the temporal rulers of France, was, of course, nothing new. In one form or other, indeed, it had existed from the time of the great St. Louis. The treaty as to the government of the Church in France, between Francis I. and Pope Leo X., endeavoured to remove all causes of friction by a careful division of the purely spiritual sphere from the temporal adjuncts, necessary to a Church endowed with great possessions. Even up to the eve of the Revolution this method of solving the difficulties between Church and State was in force, and it was found in practice to work well. In reality it is to the existence of this Concordat that M. Hanotaux, the statesman and historian, attributes the fact that France was saved to the Catholic Church in the time of the great religious revolt of the Reformation.

In coming to his agreement, or Concordat, with the Holy See, Napoleon was certainly not actuated by any love for the religion of his country. To him it was merely a matter of State politics. It was necessary, for instance, to wipe out the great debt which the nation owed to the Church on account of the confiscations of the Revolution. This required the Pope's sanction, and this sacrifice of temporal possessions was the price paid for the measure of protection to religion secured by the Concordat, and for the guaranteed, though slender, stipends to be paid to the clergy by the State. Napoleon, too, thought he saw in the Concordat a means for rivetting on the hands of the priests the chains which already bound them to the Government and fettered their practical freedom of action. Had he been dealing with any human institution this crafty plan for keeping the Church in servitude would in all probability have succeeded. Looking back, however, over the century that has passed, it must strike any reflecting mind how wonderful has been the action and progress of the Church of France in spite of its legalized bonds. Napoleon hoped to find in the clergy, so governed, hampered in their action, and kept in decent poverty, what he called a "gendarmerie spirituelle"—his moral policemen—whose duty and interest it would be to support his new imperial throne. And certainly during the nineteenth century the Church of

France in ceasing to be rich, and in being mostly dependent upon the miserable State stipends, has indeed lost much of its freedom and independence of action. Its clergy would have become—or, let us say, might have become—the mere functionaries of the Government which Napoleon had looked for, but for the fact that they had in Rome and the Pope a rallying-point outside the limits of their own kingdom. As a direct though unforeseen result of Napoleon's policy, they became in fact more and more part of the great cosmopolitan body of the Church Catholic. Their very servitude and poverty is at least sufficient to account for this most significant fact, that the very name “Gallican Church” has now passed into the domain of the archæologist.

Whether under the Empire, the Monarchy, or the Republic, the great Church of France during the nineteenth century has done its duty as well, and as conscientiously, as before the Revolution. It has not, however, all been peace. At times the Church has had to fight for its principles, as it will have to do again now, with vigour and determination. The Church of Christ, for example, has always claimed, and will always claim, liberty to speak, to write, and to teach. It could not help doing so ; and it defied the omnipotence asserted by the State when it claimed to stop its freedom of action in all such matters as pertained to its spiritual mission. In one thing, for instance, its protests and struggles were necessary for its very life, and caused considerable conflicts in the first half of the last century. “Liberty of association,” about which we have heard so much during the past months, did not really exist in a legal sense in France, and the Church especially suffered from this. “Association,” says a great French writer, “is the form and indeed the essence of the Church's life. By definition, and etymology even, the Church is an association.” The Church in France existed indeed legally as a body, but merely as a body of officials belonging to one administration. All association, whether for spreading the faith, for good works, even for the purposes of edification or teaching, was not contemplated by the law. The Church, however, never ceased to vindicate for herself this liberty “as essential to its development, its life, and its very existence.” Beyond this the clergy claimed liberty to teach. Why should they not do so? As citizens

the priests would seem to have the right of every son of France ; and as clergy, they claimed for parents, as every Catholic priest must ever claim, the right to have their children taught as they would desire. The State also put forward a claim to control the education of its future citizens, and then came the conflict. The Church resisted the demand of the State to be considered the sole educator, first by resting on the "declaration of the rights of man" and the claim of citizenship, and then by demanding to be treated according to the principles of liberty it did not itself profess. In 1849, however, the Church indicated for itself the right of teaching : or rather the popular vote gave it to them, and it is this liberty which has now been already partially destroyed and which we to-day see wholly threatened, on the ground that to allow the Church to teach is to place too much political power in its hands. But it is indeed curious to note that the present state of affairs in France hardly seems to show that the Church has managed to possess itself of much political power, during the half century it has been occupied in education.

We may now turn to the situation of the religious Orders in France, and consider the legal status which they possessed under the Concordat and indeed until recent times. It has been frequently asserted that in the agreement made by Napoleon with the Pope, the religious Orders were purposely excluded. It is indeed true that by the legislation of 1789, and subsequent years, the French Congregations were suppressed, and also that they are not specifically mentioned in the restoration of religion under the Concordat. But it has been shown conclusively by the Comte de Mun that they are really included in the first article of that treaty which guarantees the "full and free exercise of the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion." How can there be a "full and free exercise" of the Catholic religion when the Regular life is prohibited? Is not the Regular life, though, perhaps, not necessary to the essence of the Catholic faith, certainly an integral portion of its full development? Moreover, the work of the Comte Boulay de la Meruthe on *La Négociation du Concordat*, makes it certain that the Pope desired and strongly urged that the Religious Orders should be expressly mentioned in the document, and that the First Consul was unwilling to include them, not because they were thought

to be prohibited, but precisely because he desired they should be regarded as purely religious societies, not needing State recognition but depending for their creation and regulation upon "a Brief (if the Sovereign Pontiff) should deem it expedient." If other proof was wanting that the Concordat in no way contemplated the suppression of the regular Orders, we should still have the fact that in spite of the laws of 1789, 1790, and of 1792; in spite of the silence of the Concordat; in spite of Article XI. of the organic articles, the religious Congregations had already reappeared three or four years before the date of the Concordat. Houses, schools and hospitals had been opened by religious not merely in secret, not merely with the tacit recognition of the Government, but with the direct approval and encouragement of the State. "I ask of any man of good faith," writes M. de Mun, "whether in the face of these facts it is possible to pretend that the silence of the Concordat can be interpreted as meaning the suppression of the religious Congregations."

From the reconstitution of order under Napoleon as Consul, for many years, and probably for half a century, it was considered useful for religious Congregations to secure the protection of the State by obtaining *authorization* under some *ordonnance*, or patent. In this way, whether under the Empire, the Monarchy, or the Republic, large numbers of religious houses and Congregations became known as *authorized*. Side by side with these, however, there grew up others which did not desire and so did not ask for State recognition, and the tendency has been for these latter to increase in number, especially since 1877, and in consequence of the uncertainty which followed the Ferry laws of 1880. It has been suggested, and in the British press we may frequently see it asserted as incontrovertible, or assumed as self-evident, that the non-authorized religious bodies, which came in 1900 to be more numerous even than the authorized congregations, were illegal. This is a completely wrong view of their position. The laws of 1817 and 1825 only require authorization in the case of such bodies as desire to obtain State recognition for their own purposes, so as to secure the advantages which follow from the possession of the civil status or personality secured by legal existence. Until the recent law

of 1901 the non-authorized Congregations, though not recognized by the State, were not in any way illicit. It is necessary to bear this in mind, because it has been the policy of M. Combes to suggest the opposite, and to endeavour to rob the Congregations of the sympathy of law-abiding people, by representing them as rebels and law-breakers who did not dare to place themselves in relation with the State. "It cannot be too often repeated," says the Comte de Mun, "that until July 1, 1901, the non-recognized Congregations were within their rights (in remaining non-authorized); their existence was licit though they could obtain no civil personality" (or existence).

Authorization then gave to the religious houses that possessed it a legal status, and it was M. Waldeck-Rousseau's professed wish in his Bill of 1901 to furnish a ready means for all religious to *regularize* their position by obtaining authorization. He was anxious—if we may accept his reiterated expressions—whilst making unauthorized Congregations henceforth illegal in France, to extend the approval of the State to all bodies which applied for it and complied with certain formal conditions, such as the making of a general statement as to the ends and object of their institutions and of the extent of their property and means of support.

Better informed, no doubt, as to the real intentions of the party now in power in France than those who relied upon the words of M. Waldeck-Rousseau and trusted to his reiterated assertions that the object of his Bill was not to destroy the Orders, but to afford them a legal position in the State, some religious bodies at once took refuge in other countries, preferring even expatriation to the greater evils that might perhaps befall them if they asked for an authorization, which they foresaw would be denied them. It will be remembered that many, even among Catholics in this country, thought that those who thus gave up early in the struggle were ill-advised, and that events would prove them to have read wrongly the signs of the times. Unfortunately this has not been the case; but the fate of the religious who made their applications for authorization, with full faith in the honesty of M. Waldeck-Rousseau, has shown how little honesty, or justice, or fair dealing remains to-day in the Government of France.

Of those that remained, fifty-four Congregations of men and a great number of Congregations of women, said to comprise in all some 6,000 houses, sent in their applications for recognition. Most of these had long been established on the soil of France. A great many of them had for three-quarters of a century openly carried on the purposes for which they were established without let or hindrance : they had been in constant and official communication with State authorities in regard to their work, and they had enjoyed the confidence and respect of the public and municipal bodies in the places where their good works were carried on. They came in good faith to Parliament to submit to the new regulations and to ask for the authorization required by the new law.

The case of some was peculiar. Their submission to the supreme authority of the State was the result of a scrupulous wish to obey the law, and they came to ask for authorization not because they thought they needed it or that they did not in fact possess it, but because they wished to show that they were law-abiding citizens in all things. Their action was the natural result of the advice given by M. Waldeck-Rousseau to the Congregations of Savoy on June 28, 1901. "I think," he said, "that it would be prudent for them, as indeed for all who are in any particular condition, to ask for the authorization which will insure them against every kind of risk." Let us take the Collège Anglais, Douai, as an example perhaps most of interest to us. The English Benedictines had possessed a college there for the last three-quarters of a century. The property was British and had been almost continuously in the possession of our Congregation since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Even in the Reign of Terror it had been respected as the property of the English subjects when the French religious houses were dissolved and their goods confiscated, until it was seized on the outbreak of the war between the two countries not because the monks were monks, but because they were English. On the restoration of the property after the Treaty of Paris, it was administered by a bureau in Paris as British property ; and the students were, since 1826, appointed to the various burses with the full knowledge and approbation of the Minister of Interior. The existence of the college

was thus constantly brought before the officials of the State, and these dealings with them alone surely constituted an authorization in itself. Moreover, not so many years ago it was necessary to obtain a lease of the buildings at Douai from the Bureau for the purpose of carrying on the school, and this lease, with several years yet to run, was approved and signed by the President of the Republic, M. Carnot, and by the Minister of Public Instruction. As ours was in some ways considered a special position it was thought prudent to take the advice of M. Waldeck-Rousseau and to apply "for the authorization which would insure (us) against all risk." Personally, I will confess it, I never imagined that this was more than a mere matter of form and that in due course we should receive the authorization. The result you know. Our application was not even considered: we were executed with the rest *en bloc*, and the first intimation that we really received of our fate was the appearance of a liquidator at the college gates and the seizure of our goods and chattels, though we were British subjects. To-day the actual end has come. The three months of grace given to us has run out, and the Collège Anglais, which for so long has been associated with the name of Douai, from to-day (July 6, 1903) no longer exists. By a curious chance the hospitality accorded during three centuries to English Catholics by the French nation at Douai is violently terminated on the very day that President Loubet lands in England on his official visit.

The whole process has been as arbitrary as it has been unjust, for Douai is but a sample of an immense number of other religious houses. M. Combes arranges things as he pleases. Just as it pleased him by a stroke of the pen to close four thousand free schools, so it pleased him, in assigning to the Senate and the Chamber the demands for authorization which were to be divided between them, to hand six to the former and fifty-four to the latter. The accompanying suggestion to the Chamber of Deputies for the rejection of all of them *en bloc* was agreed to without difficulty or delay, and the "right of control of the Senate," which exists according to the Constitution of the Republic, in this case, by this Parliamentary *coup d'état*, was ignored. The matter was made simplicity itself by the action of M. Rabier, the "Reporter" of the measure before the

Chamber of Deputies. "Of what use is it," he asked in substance, "to discuss the ends and objects of the Congregations who have asked for authorization? We have no call to judge them as we do not mean to authorize them. Our intention is to condemn them and refuse their application, and so to destroy them under the new law." This was the view taken by M. Combes' majority; and all those who at M. Waldeck-Rousseau's invitation had presented themselves for "regularization" found their petitions rudely dismissed without consideration.

It would be interesting to know something of the ex-Prime Minister's inmost feelings to-day. In the Chamber and in the Senate in 1901 he defended his law on the ground that authorization would be granted or refused on the merits of each case, and he rejected indignantly an amendment which proposed the suppression of all existing non-authorized congregations. In the Senate, in reply to a suggestion that there was *parti pris* and that by the brute force of a majority the Orders would be condemned precisely because they were Orders, M. Waldeck-Rousseau exclaimed: "As to saying that Parliament will not grant authorization, in my opinion this is to make short work of its functions. Can you believe that the French Chambers, in face of honest statutes showing openly a reasonable, philanthropic end or one of social interest, will be animated by any absolute *parti pris* and will say: 'This is a Congregation, we refuse it authorization'?"

M. Waldeck-Rousseau's speeches also, that were posted up in every commune of France, bear witness to his engagements and to his reiterated promises in the matter. The electors, on the strength of those declarations, were assured again and again that the Government had no thought of suppressing the Congregations, and that it was in fact pledged to authorize those that would obey the new law and take the necessary steps to legalize their position. It is a complete misrepresentation to say, as the English papers have so frequently done of late, that M. Combes was returned to power with a large majority on purpose to decree the abolition of the religious Orders, and that in refusing to grant the authorization asked by them, he was merely carrying out the mandate he had received. This

issue was never before the country at all ; on the contrary, the electors in every part of France had before their eyes, in the bills posted up by the authority of the Parliament, M. Waldeck-Rousseau's own promises in regard to authorization, and his indignant denials that any measure of suppression was intended ; and, if they had any doubts upon the matter at all, they were set at rest by like pledges on the part of those that sought their suffrages.

In an eloquent passage of his pamphlet on the situation, M. le Comte de Mun describes the result of the complete confidence in the justice and honest dealing of M. Waldeck-Rousseau and his successor M. Combes.

“The flood (let loose by the former) is passing on its way, sweeping on in a sad and glorious medley, towards the obscure paths of proscription, confiscation, and exile into which those others had already preceded them whom the first blast of the tempest had uprooted. It is a crowd of innocent victims we see ; a body of men of all ages guilty only of being faithful to the name they bear and to the habit that clothes them. They are there, fifteen or twenty thousand of them, up to the last moment wholly occupied in serving their God, in praying to Him, in teaching His law, in educating the children of the people, in serving the sick and visiting the poor, or in spreading abroad in every land under the heavens the name of Jesus and that of France.”

Then come the nuns. Already the refusal of authorization has come upon them as upon their brethren in religion. Thousands of poor unfortunate ladies have been turned adrift into the world whose only fault is that they have associated to serve God in prayer and good works. Thousands of them have grown old in the cloister and are thus unsuited to begin life again. Most of them are poor and unable to support themselves in any new sphere of work, and still less able to begin life afresh in any new country where they can enjoy the liberty to serve God which is denied them in their own. In all parts of England, our bishops tell the same tale of the piteous stories of these exiled ladies who, without means of any sort, or with means of the slenderest kind, have applied and are applying to them to be permitted to set up new homes in our midst, in the vain hopes of being able to

earn their bread by a little teaching, or a little nursing. It would be cruel not to undeceive them at once, but these numerous requests have of late added greatly to the anxieties, as the need of refusal has to the sorrows of our bishops. What is before these ladies no man can tell, and already we hear of nuns whose only course has been to seek dispensation from their vows and to hope to find the necessities of life in taking up work in domestic service, or in serving as shop-women behind the counters of the Parisian millinery establishments.

Even when by the force of the law the monasteries and convents have been closed, the Congregations dissolved, and the inmates dismissed, the unfortunate religious frequently finds himself or herself still under the iron heel of the law. If he preach or lecture after his secularization, which as a priest he has surely a right to do, he can be prosecuted as recalcitrant and punished. By M. Combes, circular of April last the bishops were directed not to allow ex-religious to use the pulpits of their dioceses, and their refusal to be bound by such an arbitrary exercise of authority has been punished in certain cases by the suspension of their very inadequate salaries. In one case with which I am acquainted, two secularized religious were received out of charity by the Superior of a diocesan college as assistant teachers: immediately the college itself was closed by orders received from Paris. In another instance two nuns belonging to one family, after obtaining dispensation from their vows, were received into their father's house. Here incautiously they began to busy themselves in works of piety and, this becoming known, they received a visit from a commissary of police, who informed them that two ex-religious living together according to the law formed a "Congregation."

Hundreds of other instances could be given of the harsh and deliberately cruel treatment which has been meted out to the members of the dissolved congregations. Taking the figures given by M. Waldeck-Rousseau in the debates of 1901 as correct, there were seventy-five thousand religious to be dealt with, in the category of the non-authorized Congregations. But matters will not stop here. Religious life in France is doomed to destruction unless something unforeseen interferes to stop M. Combes' anti-

clerical policy. Already the word has gone forth that the Government does not regard previous authorization by the State as anything more than an approval accorded for a period. What the State has once authorized, says M. Combes, it can at some future time, if it thinks proper, declare to be non-authorized. This being so, we may at any time expect to see the members of the now authorized bodies, numbering some fifty-five thousand religious, added to the list of the proscribed, which means that their property will be seized by the State, and that they will be cast out into the world.

Nor, we may be sure, will that be the last act in the tragedy now being enacted before our eyes in France. Already it has been made clear, even to those who might have had any doubt previously about M. Combes' object, that the suppression of the religious Orders is merely an incident in a general campaign against the Catholic Church. The two circulars addressed to the bishops of France last April directing them what preachers they were to employ in their pulpits, and ordering them to close all churches and places of pilgrimage which were not strictly parochial, are in themselves plain indications of the lengths M. Combes is prepared to go; just as the almost universal refusal of the bishops to obey these mandates is proof that they understand the situation in the same way, and are ready to suffer any pains and penalties rather than be unfaithful to the duties of their sacred charge. What possible explanation, too, can be given of M. Combes' prohibiting the priests of Brittany and of the Basque provinces to give religious instruction to the children of their parishes or to preach except in the French tongue, except that he desired to put a stop to religious teaching of all kinds, seeing that multitudes of the parents and children of these districts only understand the Breton or the Basque languages? The words of the Bishop of Orleans addressed to the religious of his diocese on March 24th of this year, represent no more than the truth. He advised them to remain at their posts and keep open their schools, their refuges for the sick and aged, their crèches for infants and their private hospitals, until they were turned out by force.

"Reverend Mother," he continued, "the object of attack

by the decrees against the Congregations is not you and your communities, but God Himself. It is impossible now to make a mistake on this point. It is against God and Christianity that all this persecution is directed. It is not because the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul wear a grey dress ; it is not because the Sacré Coeur nuns wear a black one, that they are being driven from the teaching profession. The reason, and the only reason, is that you all, sisters and nuns alike, teach the Christian faith. God is the enemy. God is to be exiled from the soul of the young child. . . . It is not difficult to foresee what the future conduct of our present masters will be. Yesterday they drove out those religious Orders who did not ask for authorization. To-day they are driving out those who did solicit it. To-morrow they will close all the teaching establishments which are at present authorized. The day after they will close the central houses, the *maisons mères*, whither they are now forcing you to go. The Congregations of France must understand that, as long as the present state of things continues in the political world, their case is pre-judged and hopeless and that they must endure much desolation and bitter trial."

Since the Bishop wrote these words events have justified his forecast. M. Combes is carried along on the flood he has let loose. There were indications that even he, like the real originator of the mischief, M. Waldeck-Rousseau, would have wished to pause in his career of destruction, and would, temporarily at least, have closed down the flood-gates. The very financial condition of France should be sufficient to make him desirous not to add to its burdens. Having already to face large annual deficits in the revenue of the country, it is hard to understand how any statesman can contemplate the additional expenditure necessitated by the suppression of schools and hospitals and asylums which the religious had supported. An immediate expenditure of over £1,000,000 for the building of new schools ; of £190,000 for fitting them up ; and of something like half a million yearly for the payment of new teachers in them, is the official calculation of what M Combes' policy in regard to schools is going to cost. Then it has been stated on authority that there are at least 250,000 old and invalid people who have been hitherto

supported by the charity, clothed by the charity, served by the charity of the religious. These can hardly be left to starve on the roads and in the fields of fair France. What will they cost the nation? What is the least? Shall we say £10 a head? Even then we have a yearly expenditure of £2,500,000 and no provision made for sheltering them. Nothing less than madness and a senseless hatred of religion, could have initiated so suicidal a policy when, as is obvious to the most superficial observer, the public revenue, in spite of the high rate of taxation, does not nearly suffice to meet the current and necessary expenditure. And yet this is only the beginning.

Beyond the mere monetary question, there is also the serious doubt raised by competent men as to the possibility of the Government being able to furnish proper teaching in secondary schools to replace the professors they have exiled. M. Brunetière, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, stated his belief that the persecuting policy of the Government will cost some millions of francs for secondary education. As for primary education M. Combes' law destroys some 1,650 schools, and the teaching brothers alone instructed some 300,000 children. M. Ferdinand Buisson, an authority well known and recognized in France, considers that a grave peril to the State has been created by the necessary appointment of inexperienced, ill-educated, and untrained teachers to take the posts rendered vacant by the present policy of the Government.

But the grave injury inflicted upon the State by the laws against the Congregations is not our concern as foreigners. We are interested, of course, only, or mainly, in the religious side of the question, and the other matter is important only as showing how the Government, with full knowledge of the cost, determined to persevere in its work of destruction, and is thus betraying its animus and its real motive. It was obvious enough in the debates which accompanied the passing and the execution of the law. "Whether just or unjust," "whether it will be costly or even ruinous to the nation," we will have the law of suppression, so said the party which *en bloc* so ably supports M. Combes. What is it that impels them? There can be no doubt whatever. It is passion, and it is hated; and their hatred is not merely against religious life, but

hatred of the Catholic religion ; of Christianity ; and even of God Himself. It is the spirit of M. Paul Bert—forgotten though he may now be—triumphant and in activity. Already the body of governmental supporters in the Chamber are clamouring for a denunciation of the Concordat with the Pope. What that may mean the future alone can tell. Whilst some on the Catholic side would welcome the rupture, as giving the Church freedom of action and an initiative it does not now possess, others see in any denunciation of the Concordat the beginning of yet greater religious difficulties. They point out—with what truth it is impossible for us, strangers, foreigners, as we are, to say—that, as planned by the enemies of the Church, the abolition of the Concordat would mean that every diocese and every parish in the country would fall under the Law of Associations, which has struck and destroyed the religious Orders. No bishop could administer any see, and no parish could employ any priest to administer the Sacraments of the Church, except by the authorization of the Chamber of Deputies and according to any conditions it might impose. The Archbishop of Albi declares that if M. Pressensé's Bill for the abolition of the Concordat is accepted, not only will the Church lack bread ; but that she would suffer from want of cohesion. The Archbishop of Toulouse thinks that its revocation "would condemn French Catholicism to a long period of anarchy"; and the Archbishop of Aix, whilst calling attention to the fact that it is for the Pope to settle what is to be done, says that "there is every reason to fear that the separation of Church and State would only result in reducing Catholics and their institutions to a kind of outlawry." What that will mean I need not stop to point out.

What, however, is of interest and of importance for us to try and understand is how this state of affairs has come about. France is by name at least a Catholic country, and there is hardly any doubt that the country as a whole disapproves of the persecuting policy of the present Republican Government. The power, however, has been captured by a small but well-organized body of French Freemasons, who have long prepared for the time when they would be in a position to make and administer the law. Something must be wrong somewhere, when it is possible for

36,000 (which is the utmost number of the French Masons) to coerce a nation of 37,000,000. Masonry in France, it must be remembered, is undisguisedly anti-Christian and anti-religious. It will be within the memory of most here that the English Masons broke-off all relations with their French brethren, when these latter formally expunged the name of God from their charter and documents. When French Masons hold the power, then, it is to be expected that the nation will witness anti-religious legislation, which, should they think themselves strong enough, will stop at nothing. The danger ahead was long ago foreseen by Cardinal Newman. "Hitherto," he says, "the civil Power has been Christian. Even in countries separated from the Church, as in my own, the *dictum* was in force, when I was young, that: 'Christianity was the law of the land.' Now, everywhere that goodly framework of society which is the creation of Christianity is throwing off Christianity. The *dictum* to which I have referred, with a hundred others which followed upon it, is gone, or is going everywhere; and by the end of the century, unless the Almighty interferes, it will be *forgotten*. Hitherto, it has been considered that religion alone, with its supernatural sanctions, was strong enough to secure submission of the masses of our population to law and order; now the philosophers and politicians are bent on satisfying this problem without the aid of Christianity. . . . As to religion, it is a private luxury, which a man must pay for, and which he must not obtrude upon others, or indulge in to their annoyance." Strangely enough these last words re-echo the expressed sentiments of a Frenchman who the other day declared that the open churches, the Catholic symbols, and the places of pilgrimages were too aggressive to be long tolerated, and that the people in power would never rest till they had obliged people to keep their religion to themselves, and not obtrude it upon their neighbours.

Several causes have contributed to facilitate the capture of supreme power by the anti-religious party. The weight of the official votes is very considerable. Every one connected with the Government in any way, from the Prefect of a Department to the smallest shopkeeper with a tobacco licence in the smallest village, has an interest, and a direct interest in keeping the Government in

power ; their own position depends upon it. Recognizing the great importance of the official vote, it has been the persistent policy of the Republican Government for a long time past to increase the number of the *fonctionnaires* by every means in their power. To-day these pocket-voters, who can be relied upon, form a very large body. Then the tyranny exercised by the Government over their officials is undoubted. Any act of religion, or any support given to Catholic charity, or any sympathy manifested for the clerical party in any way, is duly reported to headquarters and goes against a Government *employé* when the question of promotion comes to be considered. Public life is made incompatible with religion. It is difficult to credit the lengths to which this is carried. A friend of mine has a brother in the French navy ; he has mounted in his profession with considerable distinction, and has had the command of a torpedo-boat. He has been informed within recent times that it will militate against his career if he goes much to church. He may go without difficulty when he accompanies his wife and child, but unless thus unofficially with his family, he should avoid going if he wants to rise in the service. Even when he goes with his wife, he is advised not to take a book of prayers with him, so as not to make a parade of his religion !

How is it that a people, the majority of whom are at least nominal Catholics, stand by and allow this kind of thing ? I fear that it must be said that the curse of the Church of France has been, and is, apathy and indifference. The Catholic party has no doubt identified the Catholic cause too much in the past with the monarchy, and when the Pope would urge all to rally to the existing form of government, it is to be feared that they have indeed retired from their old organizations, but have not thrown themselves into the working of others. They have shut their eyes and slept whilst the godless republican organizations have prepared their way, silently but surely, for the governmental *coup d'état* which they have so successfully carried out.

At the bottom of all, however, is Apathy—the curse against which Montalembert raised a warning voice forty years ago. At the great Catholic Conference at Malines on 18 August, 1863, he spoke on this important subject in

the presence of Cardinal Wiseman and of between two and three thousand Catholics. Under the sceptical and indifferent government of Louis Philippe, he reminded his fellow-countrymen, "the clergy had regained a little of the legitimate influence which the favours accorded them at the Restoration had caused them to lose." What use, he asked, had they made of it? Had they organized themselves? Had they taken their part and share in public life? or had they been living in the past and looking for a return to what they might love and revere in the Middle Ages but which had gone for ever. Before answering the questions his thought had suggested, he uttered what we must consider to-day as almost prophetic words of warning to those who would rest in their apparent security. "If there should happen to-day," he said, "a new revolution, one shudders to think of the reprisals which would be exacted from the clergy for the illusory alliance which has apparently existed now for some years between the Church and the Empire."

The orator then went on to criticize the attitude of Catholics :

"Everywhere," he says, "they are inferior to their adversaries in public life, since they have not yet taken their places in the great revolution which has brought into existence the new society, the modern life of the peoples. They experience an insurmountable embarrassment and timidity face to face with modern society. It causes them fear. They have not yet learnt to know, or love, or use it. Many of them still belong to the old *régime* heart and soul and count not the cost: that is they belong to a *régime* which admits neither civil equality, nor political freedom, nor liberty of conscience. This old *régime* had no doubt its high and great mission. I do not pretend to judge it, still less to condemn it. It suffices to know one thing, but that is everything: it is dead! It will never come to life again, nor any part of it."

Then, after insisting that it was useless, criminal, hazardous in the extreme to hanker after the past and neglect the duties of the day, Montalembert added :

"It is not sufficient that the renunciation (of the past) be tacit and even sincere. It must be known to all and recognized by all: it is necessary to protest frankly, boldly

and publicly against any idea of returning to a state of things the very thought of which only serves to irritate and disquiet modern society."

Had these weighty words of the great Montalembert been listened to, things might have been very different for the Church of France to-day. Unfortunately their whole drift and tenor was misunderstood and misrepresented, with the result that it seems to have been almost a point of honour for the clergy to live in the unreality of the past and for the Catholic laity to refuse to take their position as citizens of a great republic. We can all of us remember the time, not so long ago, when not to be a supporter of the monarchy and monarchical ideas was regarded by our French friends as the mark of an indifferent and even bad Catholic. To such a pitch was the hostility to the existing form of government carried that men, just because they desired to show that they were true to their religion, would not even vote for those who were to represent them in their Parliament. I well remember staying some years ago with an excellent Catholic family during the progress of an election and being amazed at the obstinate determination of the father to take no part in returning any representative to Parliament; and this is but a sample of what we have all of us heard of on all hands. To use a homely expression, the Catholic party have been "cutting off their noses to spite their faces," whilst their adversaries have been working and organizing and consolidating their forces. Now there is a call for action. "We Catholics have been asleep for years," writes the editor of one French journal. "The attitude of Catholics is a distressing psychological problem," writes another. "The whole affair is a severe lesson to us to marshal and organize our forces," says a third. Parties, however, are not made in a day, and it will take many a long year to build up organizations which should have been in existence for the past half-century.

M. Brunetière well sums up the situation in the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. It is easy to set great forces, especially religious forces and prejudices, in motion. The difficulty is to stop them at will. M. Waldeck-Rousseau can understand this, for he is no longer able to do what he was pledged to do by every consideration of honour. The turn of M. Combes has yet to

come. "To whom do we owe the present disorders that afflict France?" asks Brunetière. "To those who ought as statesmen to have secured us against them. It is their politics that have caused all the evil. If God can say to the sea, 'Thou shalt go no further!' neither M. Combes nor M. Waldeck-Rousseau can say it to the movement they have provoked. There was a talk of suppressing certain Congregations, and they have suppressed all Congregations of men, and are engaged in doing the same for those of women. All this they maintain they are doing in the interests of the secular clergy, and in the name of the Concordat which they desire to see better respected. The disorder is carried into the churches, and M. Combes has no better means of dealing with it than suppressing the pay of the curés. Is not this a question of the secular clergy? Is this not a question of *culte* which the Concordat guaranteed and organized?" But what of that? The Concordat itself is denounced, and M. Combes has spoken of this grave question receiving a possible, a probable, and even an immediate solution, with an imprudence and a levity which have served only to excite his followers to fresh assaults against the Charter of the Church's liberty in France. What the near future will bring it would be impossible and unprofitable to forecast. One thing seems certain: things have to be worse before they will mend.

Even at the last hour M. Waldeck-Rousseau's conscience seems to have been aroused. A week ago he raised his voice in the Senate in denunciation of M. Combes' action, declaring that his Bill had contemplated legalizing and not suppressing the religious congregations. He charged M. Combes with a dishonourable breach of the understanding upon which the measure of 1901, known as the "Law of Associations," had passed into law. Thus, he said, "is created a complicated situation in the presence of which the ordinary means of government do not appear to suffice." This declaration of the statesman responsible for the original measure may do something to clear him of complicity, but it is to be feared that he is powerless to stay the on-rushing torrent which he set loose and the effects of which he should previously as a statesman have considered and discounted.

For us the lesson should not be thrown away. We

Catholics of Great Britain, I fear, suffer more or less from the disease of apathy. We too do not always take our part in the life of our country and make our influence felt where it well might be of use. It is our duty not alone as citizens, but for the sake of our faith, and in order to have the means within our power when the time comes, as come it will, to defend the principles we hold so dear, at least in theory. And so, whilst sympathizing with all our hearts in the troubles which have befallen the Catholics of France, and whilst protesting with all our strength, in the name of freedom and liberty of conscience, against the action of the unbelieving Government of that country, let us take the lesson to heart and, throwing aside party and prejudice, stand together as Catholics, if and when the need shall arise, for the defence of Catholic principles and the protection of Catholic interests.

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#### POSTSCRIPT.

Since the above address was delivered many things have happened in France. The religious question is still, however, the burning question of practical politics, only that it has grown, if possible, more acute. M. Combes, in steadily pursuing his persecuting policy, has won further successes, and his Ministry has manifested a stability which no one would have prophesied for it. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, roused by frequent appeals to him, in the name of common honesty, to dissociate himself from the actions of his successor, has made an attempt to stay the onrush of the torrents he had himself let loose, and he has been swept aside in the process. The English Benedictine property at Douai has been sold, for a sum wholly inadequate, to the town authorities, and the proceeds have been placed to the credit of the Benedictines in the sum administered by the *Bureau des Fondations Anglaises*. But as the revenue derived from our property must be spent in France, and as we are not permitted to exist as religious in France, we can obviously derive no benefit from this or from our other funds held by the same trustees. Meanwhile the furniture

and all other movables of the old English Benedictine college, which had been purchased with English money, or had been the gifts of English friends to the English monks, have been sold by public auction for what they would fetch.

The foreseen also has happened in regard to the authorized Congregations. In their turn they have received notice to quit. Some months ago, M. Combes practically accepted a suggestion that no instruction should be allowed to be given by any member of a religious Congregation, even if the body were in possession of State approbation. A Bill to provide for this has since been drafted and offered for the acceptance of the anti-clerical majority who, *en bloc*, have for some time done M. Combes' bidding. The result of this Bill will be to destroy denominational education in France altogether. By it the State revokes previous authorization, and although the teaching Orders may continue for a few years, since the Government are wholly unable to supply their places at once, it is provided that the Ministry may at any time decree the closure of their schools at its convenience. Meanwhile these Congregations may not receive any new subjects, and are to send in at once a complete list of all members. When this Bill comes into operation no fewer than 3,492 Catholic schools will be closed. Of these 1,299 are boys' schools, many of them large establishments and all taught by the Christian Brothers, the rest, that is 2,195, are girls' schools, taught by various orders of nuns. This is what the *Temps* calls "the latest attack on the Liberal principle," which has been made, wholly without regard to what it will cost the nation in hard cash, by M. Combes' Ministry. According to this latest law, in five years' time at the latest, all the authorized teaching Orders will have shared the fate of their non-authorized brethren and sisters, and except for a small number of authorized contemplatives and a somewhat larger number of authorized nursing communities (if they are spared, which is not likely), the religious life will have been banished from France.

*February, 1904.*

## THE FRENCH ASSOCIATIONS BILL: ITS AUTHORS AND OBJECTS.

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BY THE REV. JOHN GERARD, S.J.

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IT is strange indeed to find that our countrymen should view with tacit, if not expressed, approval the action taken by the party now [1901] in power in France against the religious orders, action which has resulted in inflicting upon thousands of men and women, without even the semblance of a trial, penalties that should unquestionably be reserved for convicted malefactors; which is, moreover, opposed to the most elementary conception of that liberty which we so jealously guard amongst ourselves, and in the name of which very liberty the sympathies of Englishmen are largely enlisted in favour of the republican form of government across the Channel. This approving attitude has various causes. It is no doubt in part explained by the traditional prejudices which unfortunately are still so widespread and so potent, and which make numbers of excellent people assume as a first principle that whoever assails the

Catholic Church must necessarily be in the right. There can be little question that it is likewise caused by the extremely defective character of the information supplied to us by our journals, all of which is drawn from anti-clerical and anti-Catholic sources. Readers of our newspapers can scarcely be blamed if they carry away a general impression, that—as M. Yves Guyot for example puts it,<sup>1</sup>—the Associations Bill is a mere measure of self-defence, forced upon republicans by the unceasing plots and machinations of Jesuits and others, which for thirty years have been so dangerous as to absorb all that attention on the part of successive Governments which ought to have been devoted to promoting the good of the country. The British public has heard nothing on the other side. None of the speeches delivered in the Chambers by opponents of the Bill have, as a rule, been so much as mentioned by our journals, nor any of the evidence adduced by these and others as to the absolute groundlessness of such charges as the above, and as to the real motives and influences under which the Bill came into existence, and underwent the various metamorphoses, which are not the least instructive features of its inconsequent career.

But, if we choose, we can obtain some interesting information on the subject from certain somewhat premature confidences communicated to a representative of the *Daily News*, by “one of the most influential members of the Dreyfus party,” when the Rennes court-martial had recently given its

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, February 26, 1901.

verdict, and M. Waldeck-Rousseau had just come into power. In the issue of the paper for October 3, 1899, the said representative thus relates what passed :<sup>1</sup>

“So the Dreyfus matter is over ?” I inquired. “Over !” he said, with astonishment, bounding from his chair. “Good heavens ! Do you think we have waged all this campaign . . . to go no further than that ? . . . The rehabilitation of the Captain, which we intend to gain, is only an incident. . . . The strife is for far more than that, and has objects which reach far beyond. We are decided to go on with it to the end, and we will win the game, too, because we are the stronger, the more intelligent, and the richer party ; because we possess an absolute solidarity, and have maintained it and shall maintain it, all through this colossal struggle, *which we have undertaken because we intend to be the masters, and we shall be* . . . We shall employ all the resources of our wonderful organization to carry on the war between the liberty of education and the religious sects. *We shall take away the right of educating the masses from the priests and the religious bodies*, in fact, we will continue the work of the Revolution. . . . *We will take from the religious bodies the riches of which they have been so long the possessors*, and, as I say, once for all the rule of militarism.” “And the present Government ?” I asked. “The actual Government ! That is entirely on our side. *We have chosen it. We have made it*. Just wait a little ; not very long, I assure you, and you will see the dance resumed.”

Two days later (October 5, 1899) a leading article in the same paper reported, on the authority of the Paris *Soir*, the first whisper of the campaign about to be undertaken against unauthorized associations.

In what form the proposed legislation first saw the light, and how it was by successive emendations transformed, till it was weeded of all provisions which could touch bodies in which those were interested who claimed the administration for their

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere the italics are mine.

creature, and till, all pretence of political and economic principle being abandoned, the new law was frankly levelled against those associations only which take the form of Catholic religious congregations—all this is an interesting study which will claim our attention later on. At present we may confine ourselves to an inquiry as to the objects with which this weapon was forged, and the nature of the alleged abuses which it was intended to remove.

Upon this subject highly instructive information is furnished in the speeches of various opponents of the measure delivered in one or other of the French Chambers, of which, despite their ability and importance, nothing has been heard in our newspapers, and amongst which may be specified those of M. Lamarzelle in the Senate (June 11, 19, and 21, 1901), of the Comte de Mun (January 21, 1901), M. Jacques Piou (March 14, 1901), and, very particularly, of M. Prache (March 19 and 20), in the Chamber of Deputies.

The last-named speaker, devoting himself specially to the dark and puzzling subject of Freemasonry, insisted chiefly upon two points. In the first place, he observed, whilst the Government has declared it necessary to adopt new and stringent precautions against the dangers which may spring from associations having moral and political influence, by far the most active and influential of such bodies, in the political field, is not only to be left untouched by the new law, but is actually to be freed from the restrictions upon its actions which previous legislation had created. Secondly, we learn from

evidence, the authenticity of which cannot be called in question, that the principles of this body in France, at the present day—whatever they may have been in the past or may be elsewhere—are distinctly and deliberately Jacobin and irreligious, and are directed to the overthrow alike of all established institutions and of all belief of any kind in anything beyond the world of sense. A third point, of supreme significance, was added by the members of the Left and Extreme Left, forming the majority, by whose aid, not to say at whose command, M. Waldeck-Rousseau was able to carry his measure ; for as the several articles of the Masonic Creed were recited from the tribune, they made these their own by the applause with which they greeted them—applause the more enthusiastic in proportion as the doctrine in question was sweeping and thorough. I shall give in parentheses, in what follows, the information furnished by the official report as to the manner in which the various items were received when thus exhibited before the Chambers.

But in the first place M. Prache, in speaking of the documents upon which he relies, conveys a remarkable piece of information,<sup>1</sup> as follows :

In 1897, the Grand Orient Lodge made known its moral and political principles, which it lays down in a document destined for publicity. Naturally, this is prepared with extremest circumspection : defect or excess are veiled in vague phraseology :

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<sup>1</sup> I quote throughout, in the case of all speakers, from the editions of their speeches published, separately for each, by the *Comité général de Défense des Libertés d'Association et d'Enseignement*, 76, Rue des Saints-Pères, Paris.

but they stand plainly out in the secret documents reserved for the brethren.

*M. Maurice Berteaux (a member of the Left).* But they are printed all the same.

*M. Prache.* They are printed : but you forget to deposit them, and you find governments complaisant enough to tolerate your not doing what the law requires. (*Outcries on the Left.*) This is a point which I shall prove, and it will be for you to explain how you come to enjoy a privilege exclusively your own, *in spite of the protests of the director of the National Library.* (*Interruption on the Left.*)

It was from these esoteric sources that the speaker quoted such information as the following concerning the objects avowed by French Masons amongst themselves.

In the Masonic Convention of 1897, M. Hubbard spoke thus :

The republican spirit is inseparable from free-thought, which it is your duty to propagate, for without it the Republic will be, not a noble association of independent consciences, judging every question for themselves, but a herd of subjects, blind, submissive, and docile, beneath the holy-water brush of the priest instead of the sceptre of the monarch. (*Applause on the Left.*) Our great family unhesitatingly requires that the agents of public authority shall obey no other moral authority whatever but that of the Republic. (*Fresh applause.*)

On a similar occasion in November, 1899, and consequently after M. Waldeck-Rousseau's advent to power, the same speaker declared :

Positive philosophy unites all men of good faith. *The present Ministers are all positivists,* which is the reason that they can all agree on certain points, though of various shades of opinion. If Freemasonry is and remains positivist it will be mistress: We must refashion the mental attitude of the nation. (*Très bien ! très bien ! on the Left.*)

Similarly in a Masonic Congress at Paris in 1900, M. Marcel Huart thus delivered himself :

We must entirely recast our [educational] programme, and must in particular tear out that shameful page whereon a divine morality is still prescribed to the schoolmasters of France, whose task it is to teach our budding democrats the A B C of universal democracy. (*Bravo!*)

Still more solemnly, the official orator of the same assembly thus spoke in its name :

Well, my brethren, a new soul must be breathed into the nation : and it is our task to do the work ; it is their task who have the charge of governing the Republic. We are men of tolerance, of course. We have proved that before and we will prove it constantly again. But in the case of legitimate defence special rights are created : and in presence of a social peril, sentimentalities must give place to the necessities of action. (*Applause.*) Dogma is an instrument of domination and conquest : let us fight against dogma. And the first blow to deal, that which it will feel most, is to stop the supplies. Those who want worship should pay for it. (*Applause.*) As for those who, while their faith keeps its hold, have not the means of treating themselves to such a luxury, it will not be long before they renounce it, and learn very philosophically to do without it, hearing their priests say to them—"No money, no Mass." The congregations are in conspiracy and form centres of resistance. Let the congregations be dissolved and expelled. (*Loud applause on the Left.*)

As for education—of all kinds—it should remain, while waiting for something better, the sole monopoly of the secular State. (*Très bien ! très bien !*) State employments, without exception, whether military or civil, ought to be reserved exclusively for the officials and soldiers, who shall give proof not only that they have made their studies, primary, secondary, or higher in secular institutions (*Applause on the Left*), but that their children are in like case. Then will unity be established in the aspirations of our country and peace of mind. (*Très bien ! très bien !*) Then will republicans come to their own again, as they did after the *Seize-mai* and after Boulangism. (*Applause on the Left.*)

In view of such declarations of policy M. Prache thus continued :

There then is the philosophic system of Freemasonry. Its hostility is not for dogma alone, but for the teachings of reason as well—for the idea of God Himself. For tolerance it cares nothing. It desires the moral unity of the country, and to produce the moral unity these are the doctrines it would impose. Republicans of the past placed the principle of toleration far above all their own particular aspirations and interests. They believed that every man should be free to think for himself, and they declared war in the name of liberty of conscience against religious organizations which ventured to burden other men's consciences by calling in the aid of the civil power. It is *you* who nowadays render yourselves guilty of "clericalism." The really clerical Church is that of the *Rue Cadet*.<sup>1</sup>

Again, in another part of his speech, Mr. Prache said :

Liberty of philosophic speculation is perfectly lawful, and I do not in this tribune contend against Freemason associations because of their ideas. What I will not admit, what I am attacking, is their claim to impose those ideas upon us by law. I have shown you from two documents issued by the Lodges that the end pursued by Freemasonry is to impose this doctrine upon our officials and to make it the basis of our scholastic legislation. According to the Freemasons, a republican should of necessity be a free-thinker. This is what orators entitled to speak in the name of Freemasonry have explicitly declared. As far back as 1882 a brother who was a professor in the faculty of literature at Douay proclaimed this principle : "The distinction between Catholicism and Clericalism is purely official, devised for the needs of the tribune : but here, in a Lodge, let us speak out the truth : Catholicism and Clericalism are one and the same." (*Applause on the Extreme Left.*)

I am delighted at your applause, gentlemen, for the country will now be assured of the sense and scope of the

<sup>1</sup> Where are situated the headquarters of the Grand Orient Lodge.

formulas you use in addressing it. It will know exactly what you mean when you speak of republicans and republican principles ; and will thus be able to make its choice between liberal and sectarian republicans, between true liberty and Jacobin despotism. (*Applause on the Right and in the Centre. Ironical cries on the Extreme Left.*) The declaration of the Douay professor winds up thus : "A man cannot be both a Catholic and a republican." There is the genuine doctrine of radicals and socialists.

That such a sketch of the creed which it is sought to impose upon all Frenchmen is by no means exaggerated or unfair is abundantly clear from testimonies similarly adduced by M. Lamarzelle before the Senate. Thus in 1896 M. Combes, then Minister of Public Instruction, speaking at Beauvais, said :

At an epoch when all ancient beliefs, all more or less absurd, and all erroneous, are tending to disappear, it is in the Lodges that the principles of true morality find an asylum.

Of what nature are these principles we learn from the manifesto of which we have already heard as issued by the "Grand Orient."

Masonry [declares the document] seeks the origin of the ideas of duty, right and wrong, and justice, neither in pretended divine revelation, nor in philosophical ideas.

And a distinguished member of the same body, M. Fernand Faure, thus developed the thesis, December 5, 1885 :

I see no necessity of farther insisting before you that we should seek to banish that religious influence which is called clerical. As to clericalism, no manner of doubt or difference of opinion can be entertained. But I go further : I say we

must eliminate all the philosophical ideas, or to say better, all the beliefs, which not being grounded upon science, upon the observation of facts, and free reason alone, elude verification or discussion. Such beliefs are in truth a disease of the human mind.

And M. de Lanessan, now a member of the Government and Minister of Marine, summed all up, on occasion of the Solstitial Feast of a Lodge in 1880, in words which I prefer to leave in the original :

Car nous devons écraser l'infame ; et l'infame, ce n'est pas le cléricalisme, c'est Dieu !

The programme to this effect was thus officially set forth in 1894 by M. Bourceret, Reporter of the Propagandist Committee of the Grand Orient :

We will rapidly sketch what should be the main lines of masonic propaganda. We would have its action cover the whole ground, and prepare the emancipation of consciences by combating the futile teachings of the Churches and their influence. Let us labour to ruin clericalism and gradually to sap the spirit of religion. Let us remind those who seem to forget, that the separation of Church and State is our constant aim. And for this end, by the way, let us preach by our example, ourselves in our own families keeping our consciences aloof from Church influences, putting our principles in practice, and shutting out of our houses the priests, whom we desire to expel from civil society. (*Applause on the Left.*)

In 1885 another speaker had laid it down as a principle :

There must be no half-measures. Men must be against the Church or against us.

And the expression “the Church” is, as we have seen, to be understood in the largest possible sense. Thus one of the masonic lecturers, M. Pasquier, in 1899 addressed the Lodge called “Les droits de l’homme” :

In taking for the subject of my lecture the crimes of the Church, it is not my intention to assail Catholicism alone, but religions of every kind (*Très bien ! très bien !*), the spirit of religion itself. Our part should be more extensive, and should issue in the total suppression of religion and clericalism of every description. (*Très bien ! très bien !*)

Such, then, are the ideas by which France is to be regenerated, and accordingly it is laid down as a sacred duty for the body whose utterances we are considering to co-operate in the diffusion of these ideas, which is to be effected chiefly in two ways —by securing the election of their votaries to Parliament, and, as we have already heard, by instilling them into the minds of youth in the process of education. To secure success in the electoral campaign, as M. Prache pointed out in the Chamber, the general body of the electorate not being as yet sufficiently enlightened, and being likely to be repelled by a plain statement of the programme, in the carrying out whereof they are to be induced to bear a hand, the representatives of the Lodges are to practise a prudent system of mental reservation, and to keep in the background those subjects, dearest to their own hearts, which might let the people know too much. Thus, as he tells us :

The Lodges spread their doctrine by means of the press, by organizing lectures, and by distributing pamphlets. The

organization of the lectures is very remarkable : the Lodges apply to the Grand Orient for a lecturer, who is frequently a counsellor of the Order, or one of the numerous orators whom it is accustomed to send on the mission. . . .

*M. Chauvin* (interrupting). There are no missionaries amongst us. Freemasonry never uses that term.

*M. Prache*. I beg your pardon : these are the words used by the Grand Orient, and I am sorry, *M. Chauvin*, that you, who are one of the lecturers in question, should be unacquainted with this. The lecturers, as a rule at least, present themselves, not as being appointed or delegated by the Lodges, not as Freemasons, but as socialists or radicals. A lecture is arranged ; the hearers do not suppose it is a Freemason to whom they are listening, and at the Congress of Eastern Lodges held at Lyons in 1896 we learned the reason why.

Lecturers [it was said], when they present themselves as Freemasons, are the object of attacks which must be avoided. We should, therefore, never disclose ourselves, but establish and support the measures we favour in an occult manner. We must not give to the multitude the impression that we are as intolerant a sect, and as much possessed by the spirit of domination, as are our enemies. Our best safeguard and real strength is masonic secrecy carefully preserved. In fine, the masses need an ideal, and if we can provide them with one better than they have at present, it is the part of wisdom to abstain from exhibiting ourselves as a kind of religion.

So, likewise, Parliamentary candidates were required, in a Masonic Convention of the year 1897, to deposit with their several Lodges a written declaration of faith, in which they pledged themselves to support all anti-clerical, socialist, and labour-*versus*-capital legislation, but the publication of this creed, in such form as it could reach the electors, was not required, the reason being that urged by one of the speakers, *M. Jullien* :

With such a programme not a single Republican candidate could show his face throughout the country. It is imperatively necessary to present ourselves only as supporters of the ideas which are held by the majority of Republican electors.

It is, however, the education of youth that is recognized as all-important, and towards the obtaining of absolute control over this every effort is to be directed. Here, too, it is not difficult to discern the root idea of those who framed the Associations Bill. As the Comte de Mun asked the hostile majority in the Chamber of Deputies :

Whence comes it, gentlemen, that being no longer able to apply to these religious antiquated laws which have fallen into desuetude, having no fault or offence to charge them with, you yet continue this outrage, and introduce to the country as a law on behalf of liberty what for some you intend to make an instrument of proscription ? When you have done talking about mortmain and economic dangers, you have but one reason to give—that which is at the bottom of this whole discussion : namely, that amongst these religious congregations, amongst these citizens, there are some who, availing themselves of the right common to all, undertake the office of educating youth, and find many families in France who are ready to entrust them with their children. Yes—there it is !

There is the true and only motive of your endeavours. Mortmain, the milliard [to be wrung from the congregations], the abdication of natural rights [involved in religious vows],—these are but the stage-tricks, I had almost said the tomfooleries, whereby bumpkins are wont to be inveigled in and kept wonder-stricken to see the piece played out. Behind such clamour and clap-trap one can descry the claim everlasting made by the Jacobins, to govern men's ideas, to impose their own doctrines, and to lord it over the consciences of others. This is the claim which the President of the Council [M. Waldeck-Rousseau] calmly uttered, as though they were the simplest of political truisms, when at Toulouse he denounced the idea of two bodies of youths, separated less by their position than by their education ;—which bodies a few days afterwards M. Viviani contrasted as being brought up the one under the shadow of dogma, the other amid the illumination of science.

As might naturally be expected, masonic orators have, amongst the initiated, been very urgent upon this subject.

In the Convention of Eastern Lodges, in 1892, M. Beauquier thus drew a picture of the state of things to be brought about :

As I said just now, and I come back to the point because I deem it essential, we must have with us within our temple all educators and instructors of youth. We shall never see the Republic set on a lasting basis until there shall be found in every village a Freemason schoolmaster, a secularist parish priest, who can be set against the other parish priest, and can profitably combat his pernicious influence. We shall never see the Republic definitely established until every child trained by such a teacher shall have in his hands no Catechism but that of the Rights of Man, and of the Citizen (*Applause on the Left*), when the communion-rails shall be deserted, when the money-boxes shall be empty, and the Curé, to keep himself from starving, shall be obliged to consume the stock of wafers into which, under the name of hosts, he professes to make Christ descend. (*Cheers and laughter on the Left*.)

So noble and exalted is this object to be held as to take precedence of all other considerations. Not only is liberty to be of small account when it is question of establishing a republic in accordance with such ideas, but a principle is to be adopted without scruple, which when falsely attributed to others is stigmatized as the essence of all wickedness—the principle that the end justifies the means. It was thus that in 1891 one of its members exhorted the Grand Orient to adopt what is known as the *Vœu Pochon et Cocula*, of which more anon.

The proposal is contrary to absolute liberty: but we, Freemasons, are we Liberty's devotees? No, we are members of a sect, but members of a sect which places above all else the safety of the Republic. Whatever are the means that we may employ for the salvation of the Republic, we account them good. (*Très bien! très bien! on the Extreme Left*.)

As to the *Vœu Pochon et Cocula* itself—which we have heard acknowledged to be “contrary to absolute liberty,” its exposition before the Chamber elicited some remarkably frank avowals. Here is the report :

*M. Prache.* The *Vœu* runs as follows :

“In future no one shall be capable of any public function in the gift of the State who has not pursued the studies preparatory to that function in the schools affiliated to the University. Diplomas, warrants, and certificates shall be granted only to such candidates as during the three years preceding the examinations were students in a State school, departmental or communal.” (*Très bien ! très bien ! on the Extreme Left.*)

*M. Jules-Louis Breton.* That does not go far enough, but, however . . .

*M. Clovis Hugues.* Sound doctrine that !

*M. Prache.* The *Vœu* is not forgotten, it has been renewed every year in the Lodges and Conventions of the Grand Orient.

The teachings so zealously propagated have spread, and now find devoted disciples amongst all sorts and conditions of men, but especially amongst those whom their effects promise to benefit. The following passage-at-arms in the Senate is instructive :

*M. Lamarzelle.* We all know what has now become of tolerance (*neutralité*). You have heard in the Chamber these words of M. Baudin, Minister of Public Works, who on occasion of the inauguration of the Upper Primary School at Nantua, November 12, 1899, said that it was the duty of teachers to prepare for the future, by weaning the young minds confided to their care from the prejudices which have become traditional. You have also been told of the teachers’ banquet, December 8, 1900, presided over by M. Leygues, Minister of Public Instruction, whose subordinates thus addressed him through one of their number : “To teach in school is not our only work, or care, or duty. We have to act always and everywhere. We are in the midst of each commune as representatives of civil and secular society, the

propagandists in some degree of the secularist idea (*l'idée laïque*)."

Here is something else: the circular of a Society which styles itself the Federation of Secular Youth, and gives to its circular all possible publicity. I read as follows—"To all such as, reared in the falsehood of dogmas and the servitude of an exploded discipline, have had the courage to shake off this yoke and emancipate their conscience—to secularist teachers and all schoolmasters who will substitute for an insincere and demoralizing tolerance the fruitful vigour of a teaching thoroughly impregnated with Republican free-thought . . . ."

(Let us hear no more of tolerance.)

*M. Victor Leydet.* "Très bien!"

*M. Lamarzelle.* Well said, is it not! You are quite right to cry, "Très bien," and I am happy to record this mark of approbation as coming from you: but you must not be surprised if I presently draw therefrom certain conclusions. Send your own children if you will to these free-thinking schools, but let us have schools to which we can send ours—schools in which are taught the doctrines that are dear to us, not doctrines which we abhor.

The circular I have quoted is signed by the President, M. Lapicgne, *maitre de conférences* in the Sorbonne, and by M. Pérez, of the higher Normal School: and to give it greater authority it bears the heading, "Federation of Secular Youth: Honorary Presidents, MM. F. Buisson, Professor of the Sorbonne, and A. Delpech, a Senator."

Of the auxiliaries thus recruited by the Lodges the most notable were the Ministers who, by the Bill which they have succeeded in carrying, have given so large an amount of practical effort to the desired reforms. We have already heard it boasted by a member of the extreme party, that the Ministry of M. Waldeck-Rousseau is bound to fall in with the ideas of those to whom it owes its existence and the history of the measure in question, scarcely comprehensible without some such key, exactly corresponds with this account of the state of things behind the scenes.

When first introduced to public notice, the pro-

posed law was to be all which it now is not. It was to be no piece of exceptional legislation by which some alone were touched, but was to be built upon principles affecting all citizens alike. It was on no account to interfere with liberty of teaching. So said, in Parliament, the President of the Committee charged with the examination of the Bill, the Minister of Public Instruction, and the Premier, M. Waldeck-Rousseau himself. As the latter assured the Chamber :

When we come to discuss Article 14 of the Bill, I shall make it clear that the proposed enactments have absolutely no bearing upon legislation concerning teaching, and until such legislation shall have been modified, it remains in force, as a matter of course, and the law before us does not even touch it.

Yet the same Minister, in a speech at Toulouse, sounded a very different note :

If we attach so great importance to the Association Law, it is because it carries with it, at least in great part, the solution of the problem regarding teaching.

There is no doubt as to which of these utterances is the more straightforward. The first belongs to the phase of the enterprise when it was sought to do one thing while professedly intent upon another ; the second, to the ultimate stage when it was found necessary to call things by their names.

At first it was thought sufficient to declare that no association could be tolerated the motive of which was contrary to justice and to law ; and then it was to be argued that inasmuch as the vows of religion

constitute a self-suppression or abnegation which no man has a right to undertake, the congregations of which they are an essential feature are intrinsically bad and unlawful. But such an objection, as was speedily urged, must touch all congregations alike wherein such vows are taken ; no authorization by a Government can affect the nature of things ; and the bodies Ministers desire to retain must be branded as radically evil no less than those that they wish to be driven out.

Community life was next chosen as the rock of offence ; a clause being inserted which disallowed "all associations the members of which dwell in common." But here arose at once a difficulty still more formidable. The custom, originally established in Belgium, has been introduced in France and is there gaining ground, of young, unmarried workmen banding together in bodies numbering from a score to a hundred and upwards, to maintain establishments where they can live more comfortably and economically than in lodgings. These were evidently threatened by a proposed clause, and accordingly the newspapers indignantly asked whether it is not the right of citizens to suit their own tastes as to such conditions of life—and the clause made haste to disappear.

Another device was tried. Restriction was to be confined to associations between Frenchmen and foreigners, or associations of Frenchmen having their headquarters or official centre abroad. Here, it was evidently thought, had been found a solid basis, and M. Waldeck-Rousseau insisted that good order and national security were alike seriously

involved. Yet this so important provision vanished from the law even more unceremoniously than the others. Besides religious congregations, there is also the Socialist International, to which the above description obviously applies, and its adherents were not disposed to submit to the proposed treatment. "You shall not," said M. Groussier, amongst others ; "you shall not, under pretext of fighting the congregations, try to fight us at the same time. We will not stand it." Wherefore the Government, pocketing the affront, and oblivious of good order and national peril, dropped the offensive paragraphs.

Thus it came about that, as M. Piou told his colleagues in the Chamber :

The Committee has abandoned the circumlocutions devised by it in co-operation with the Government in order to strike at the religious congregations without mentioning them. At the last moment it has realized that life in common is not a sufficient cause of proscription, and that engagements taken to one's own soul, under the sanction of conscience alone, are not unlawful objects of traffic. Wherefore, weary of looking for roundabout approaches, it has ended by going straight for its goal, and decided to call its victims by their name.

Straight for their goal the extremist party have accordingly gone, and have proscribed the objects of their antipathy without troubling themselves to discover a rational or judicial basis upon which to ground the proscription. They have been challenged over and over to produce evidence that the congregations have taken any active part in politics, but, says M. Lamarzelle, "with the sole exception of the Assumptionists in respect of their newspaper *La Croix*, in spite of all inquisitions,

investigations, and seizures, they have discovered just nothing at all." They have been similarly challenged in regard of education, and with a like result. As the Comte de Mun put it to M. Waldeck-Rousseau :

Do you remember, Mr. President of the Council, a sitting when we were in Committee on the subject of education, when M. Jacques Piou asked you, apropos of the scholastic qualifications [to be required of candidates for office], whether you could quote any facts which demonstrate that those brought up in free schools, when they became functionaries of the State, have served it ill? There was silence ; all waited for your reply, which might be final. You answered that you had no facts to quote, but that you were quite convinced of it. This is exactly the style as reported to us of one of the orators of the 18th Fructidor. "Proofs! Against royalists there is no need of proofs : I have my convictions." But I beg to differ, Mr. President of the Council ; there *is* need of proofs. When you denounce before the nation a whole class of young people ; when you propose to expel them from all public employment ; when you accuse their masters of corrupting them, you have to prove what you say. For fifty years have these masters been teaching : what a number there should be of those they have corrupted to exhibit !

There have certainly been vague declamations and sweeping assertions in plenty, but of facts to justify the course adopted there have been none. Yet it has naturally been desired to disguise the real character of the monstrous tyranny thus exercised upon no other principle than that those should take who have the power, and those should keep who can, and assiduous efforts have accordingly been made to disclaim all idea of persecution or hostility towards religion. Nothing was farther from his intentions, protested M. Waldeck-Rousseau himself, than to meddle with any man's faith ; he claimed no sort of right to do so. Nor did he assail the Church,

he rather interfered on behalf of its genuine representatives, the secular clergy, against the malign influence of the congregations which is deleterious to Catholicism itself.

But all the same, as the Comte de Mun told his victorious adversaries, it was fear of Catholicism and of Christianity that was at the bottom of the whole movement.

That which so alarms you to-day [he said], is that face to face with the body of socialist youth growing up in your *lycées*, there is arising a body of Christian youth, more and more numerous every day. For there is the point, as you know well, there is the great fact of our epoch, which is sufficient to show the folly of your enterprises. For five-and-twenty years you have wielded power without a rival; you have had public instruction in your hands; you have distributed employment and favours; you have had the disposal of money grants. And after a quarter of a century of uninterrupted domination, with no serious opposition, you discover on a sudden—and this is the motive of your proposals—that the middle class is slipping from you, that your very officials—your solicitude and your hope—claim for their children the liberty of Christian education.

And that this is no more than the truth, in spite of all the disclaimers uttered by Ministers, they and the world are bluntly told by the leaders of those imperious allies, by whose aid alone have they obtained power or can retain it, and who, as the price of their assistance, claim the right of making the Government dance to any tune for which they choose to call. Thus does M. Viviani, the foremost and most outspoken orator of the Extreme Left, sweep away the professions of M. Waldeck-Rousseau.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech of January 15, 1901. Paris, *Imprimerie Modèle*.

I would ask the Government, in view of the everlasting, logical, and natural alliance between the Catholic Church and the congregations, what course we are going to adopt, and wherefore we assail the congregations if we maintain an attitude of tolerance towards the Church. The Government may well ask itself, before it sets to work, whether the said alliance be lasting or temporary. Is the cohesion of the Church and the congregations the cohesion of a day? Is it at the mercy of a political move, of a dexterous negotiation, of a change of government, or even a change of *régime*? On the contrary, by force alike of tradition and of logic, on account of the essentially international character of the Catholic faith, has not the Church come to be linked so closely with the congregations that for the Catholic body in general they are what are flesh and blood in our natural bodies. But if this be so, if this bond be ever-enduring as history and logic guarantee, what is our attitude to be? I fancy we shall not long be engaged with these liberal subterfuges which weary out our patience by declaring that there is any difference between sincere Catholics and Clericals.

We must take charge of education, and make it plain that we cannot always be the victims of words and phrases, that to be sure, liberty of education would be a good thing if it were possible, but that between the practical monopoly, created by the Church and the legitimate monopoly created by civil society and reverting to the State, there can be no hesitation.

But assure yourselves, even when you have done all this, you will have solved but a part of the problem. As I have asked you before, do you imagine that this law brings us to our last word or last battle? Why, it is but a skirmish, in comparison with the combats of the past and the future. In truth, as M. de Mun has well said, here meet in conflict the society founded on the will of man and that founded on the will of God. (*Très bien! très bien!*) The question is, what position are we going to take in this battle, and are we going to be satisfied with an Associations law? Well—it must be said, and I will say it, hard as my words may seem—the congregations and the Church threaten you, not alone because of their external action, but because they propagate faith.

And another prominent member of the same party, M. Jules Guesde, declared, in words cited in the tribune of the Chamber :

"The question at issue is one between us and the capitalistic society (*la société capitaliste*). That society rests upon the executive Government, the Army, and the Church. Of the Government and the Army we can easily dispose. The real power we have to assault is the Church."

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Such, unmistakably, are the origins of the Associations Bill, which, while represented by its advocates as necessary for the perfect union of minds and hearts, cannot fail to awaken amongst Frenchmen the most bitter and enduring animosities. As M. Lamarzelle said, apostrophizing the Premier :

It is a war of ideals, and that is the reason why it is a war against the Church, for the ideals of the congregations are those of the Church. What you attack in combating them are the dogmas of faith, it is the faith of Catholics itself. Against this assertion, M. President of the Council, you have protested with the utmost energy, affirming that it is not your wish to declare war on the Church. Well, allow me to tell you, notwithstanding the indisputable authority attaching to your person which your great ability has acquired, that your personal wishes count for little in this matter. What is of real moment is the will of those who are with you, who are at your back, of those who have helped you to take this first step—for in their eyes it is but a first step—of those whose strength you have much enhanced by making use of them, and who will leave you behind when you no longer help them.

Therefore, whether you will or no, you have set in motion the anti-Catholic host, and in spite of all your talent, and your singular dexterity, you have not the power of saying to it, "Thus far shall you go and no further." It is a religious war which you have enkindled in the land.

Is it not a most extraordinary phenomenon, to come back to the point from which we started,

that enactments founded on such principles as these should meet with any toleration from the public opinion of Englishmen ? Stranger still that they should be welcomed and belauded by that section of the press which distinctively describes itself as "religious," and yet finds a fresh ground of denunciation against the exiles flocking to our shores, in the fact that they are banished by those who make no secret of their intention to banish Christianity.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**One Penny Each**

**The Jesuit Oath  
The Secret Instructions of Jesuits**

# **“ROME’S APPALLING RECORD:”**

OR THE

## **FRENCH CLERGY AND ITS CALUMNIATORS**

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BY THE REV. JOHN GERARD, S.J.

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IN one regard at least the kind of religious spirit which subsists on hatred of the Catholic Church, exhibits a remarkable analogy to the famous Philosopher’s Stone. This was warranted—could it but be found—to change any base metal or worthless dross into sterling gold. In like manner a certain class of people, claiming in a very special manner to be “religious,” can perform transmutations no less wonderful, and replenish their treasure-house from the least promising materials. They start with the principle that to assail the Church is so supremely meritorious as to furnish convincing evidence of every excellence in the assailant; and accordingly the more bitter and implacable be his attitude towards her, the more sure they are of his wisdom and virtue.

It is plainly on this safe and facile principle that a recent biographer has declared Voltaire to have been an eminently religious person,—a verdict which has attracted wonderfully little notice on the part of critics; and an example no less remarkable is furnished by the attitude

assumed by the Yahoos of the Protestant Press towards Voltaire’s worthy disciple, the present French Premier.

To all who have any acquaintance with the course of French affairs it must be perfectly obvious that the real object steadily pursued by M. Combes, and the intolerant faction whose tool he has become, is to de-Christianize the nation, to stamp out every vestige of religious belief, to proscribe the very name of God, and make a clean sweep of every influence that could stem the tide of blank infidelity. It is no less manifest that they have begun their attack with those of whom they are most afraid, and that if they have refrained from assailing others, it is not on any score of love or tolerance, but only because they know that from these they have nothing to fear. But to listen to the vociferous utterances of what we may style the Protestant gutter-press, it might be supposed that the French Minister is a man of God, urged only by a high and holy indignation to rid the land of a rank abomination which cries to Heaven for vengeance ; and that if he declares war upon the Church,—her priesthood, her Orders, and her education,—it is only because he knows her to be a sink of corruption whereof the country must be rid, if its people are to breathe a pure and wholesome atmosphere.

Such undoubtedly is the moral of a broadsheet circulated some months ago by the Protestant Press Agency, under the title, “Rome’s Appalling Record,” with the object of showing, in its own choice language, that the Catholic clergy of France are a set of “moral dung-bugs,” that our countrymen are guilty of inexcusable folly in “allowing France to dump her Romish *débris*, male and female, on the shores of Protestant England,” and that the great lesson to be learnt is this : “Englishmen and Englishwomen ! As you love your God and your country, keep your children from the abominable Confessional. No peace with Rome !”

The document thus introduced consists of a number of gross charges, fifty-two in all, said to have been established against clerics or religious, chiefly in France, during the years 1897, 1898, and 1902; and we are bidden to remember that, “A tree is known by its fruit.” As to the exact character of the charges, it will be sufficient to say that they are mostly of a nature which, while it makes decent people loth to speak about them, appears at the same time to furnish a supreme attraction for writers of another stamp.

When we proceed to examine the revolting catalogue, it speedily becomes clear that it would be interesting to know more of its history. When it first made its appearance it was industriously circulated, and forced upon the notice of Catholics as something that would certainly confound them. Now, however, it manifests so retiring a disposition that it seems impossible to procure a specimen—those who put it forth protesting that it is completely out of print, and that they have not a single copy left with which to oblige a customer. As to its contents, those who desire to know upon what authority such grave allegations are based do not appear likely to have their curiosity gratified. As a matter of course in such a production, no sources of information are indicated, but it at once becomes evident that they are not the same throughout, the records for the years 1897 and 1898 being clearly drawn from a source different from that of 1902. And what of the intervening years? Why this curious hiatus? It cannot be said that much light is thrown on the subject by the reply of a prominent official of the Agency, Mr. A. Le Lievre<sup>1</sup> :—“The leaflet was sent to press in a hurry; that is the reason why the figures for 1899, 1900, and 1901 were omitted.” Mr. Le Lievre proceeded to give a little information as to sources. The statistics for 1897 and 1898, he tells

<sup>1</sup> *Daily News*, February 5, 1904.

us, were "taken from the Boston (U.S.A.) *Citizen*, while the 'shocking' list for 1902, compiled by a French journalist, is taken from the Paris *Lanterne*." It certainly appears a rather curious mode of procedure to seek information concerning the action of French tribunals in an American newspaper, or in France itself to have recourse to a journal of low character and hostile bias. If the things alleged really happened, they must have been notorious, and there could not be the slightest difficulty in obtaining testimony on all hands, and from sources open to no suspicion.

The English copyists are evidently persuaded that an "Abbé" is an "Abbot," and in consequence it would appear from their list that Abbots in France are at least as plentiful as blackberries. In like manner, they take "Curé" to mean a "Curate," and seem to see no difficulty in the two offices being united in the same person. In the earlier period, however (1897 and 1898), by far the largest element in their catalogue is furnished by Brothers of teaching Orders,—whose case could at least have no connection with the Confessional, with which they are anxious to connect their Record. Of these nineteen are cited, as against four "Abbots," one "R.P.," and one "Professor of Morality." In 1902, on the other hand, we find but eight Brothers,—against ten "Abbots," who were also "Curates," two who were "Abbots" simply, two "Abbés," and one "Monsignor,"—condemned, in Belgium, for embezzlement. Moreover, in 1897, we have two "former Brothers," and in 1902, one "former Benedictine," with whose delinquencies it is surely rather hard to charge the bodies they have abandoned. On the same principle, the clergy might be made responsible for the doings of M. Combes.

These, however, are minor matters which do not touch the heart of the question. What is to be thought of this horrible indictment itself, and how far does the light it

professes to afford reveal the true condition of the French clergy? Are they in reality the set of monsters and “dung-bugs” whom the austere moralists of the Protestant Press Agency feel it their duty to denounce?

To answer such questions by a detailed examination of the several cases alleged is a task rendered practically impossible by the style in which the charges are preferred, for the method of giving no references has this obvious advantage, that it is impossible to verify any. Fortunately, however, there are other means of satisfying ourselves as to the true state of the case.

Such means are furnished by a pamphlet recently published in Belgium,<sup>1</sup> in which the whole question is carefully examined, and by two articles by M. Georges Bertrin in the Paris *Correspondant*,<sup>2</sup> from which we learn what follows.

In the year 1872 an official Government report was presented to the French Legislative Chambers, giving a detailed analysis of the sentences passed in either criminal or civil cases against members of the various liberal professions, from the commencement of the year 1850 to the close of 1871. According to this return, amongst all the lay professional classes that of notaries stood far higher than any other before the law, and in it one individual out of every 873 had each year incurred a sentence of some kind. Against members of the clerical body, on the other hand, including religious of both sexes—during the same period there were in all 72 *accusations* brought before the tribunals. According to the Government estimate there were in this class 120,000 persons, and therefore there was one *accusation* yearly for every 35,294 “clerics”—the proportion being thus only one-fortieth of the *condemnations* in the exemplary class

<sup>1</sup> *Le Clergé Catholique devant les Tribunaux et devant la Presse.*  
Société Saint-Augustin, Desclée, de Brouwer, et Cie., Gand.

<sup>2</sup> January 25, 1901, and December 25, 1903.

of notaries. There seems, moreover, to be little doubt that the official estimate of the number of “clerics” is far too small, and that it should be at least 175,000, which would give rather less than one accusation annually for every 50,000.

That these statistics were compiled in no spirit of undue partiality for the clergy is sufficiently plain from the fact that in this class, and in it alone, not *sentences* are recorded, but *accusations*. How many acquittals there were, we are afforded no means of judging. Yet certainly there were some: in fact our authority declares that in three instances, which alone it has been found possible to investigate, the charges utterly broke down when brought into court. One nun was accused of having roasted children alive, and another of having punished a child by making it sit on a red-hot stove. Despite the monstrous incredibility of such charges, both defendants were denounced before trial, in the most violent terms, by the anti-clerical press; both were entirely cleared before the tribunal; but in neither instance was the smallest reparation made by those who had vilified them.

The third example is even more instructive. A priest, the Abbé Vincent, had a foul charge preferred against him by a number of young women representing themselves as having been his victims. In his consternation the Abbé lost his head, and was so ill-advised as to fly the country and take refuge in Belgium. In consequence, judgement was pronounced against him by default, with a sentence of penal servitude for life; and during two years afterwards the iniquities of this clerical miscreant formed a constant topic of denunciation in the anti-clerical press, and were trumpeted abroad over the length and breadth of Christendom. At the end of this period, the retreat of the fugitive being discovered, he was arrested, brought back to France, and put upon

his trial. But the services of able counsel having been secured on his behalf, the evidence for the prosecution at once broke down so utterly under cross-examination that the public prosecutor (M. Deschamps, Procureur de la République) threw up his brief, and the judge (M. Bernard, Président du Tribunal) directed the jury to return a verdict absolutely acquitting the accused on all points. Yet, in spite of the manifest proof thus afforded that there had been not only fraud but conspiracy, the legal authorities would not order the prosecution of those who had done an innocent man so grievous a wrong, which serves at least to show that they were not prejudiced on the clerical side. It need scarcely be added that no reparation was made to the injured priest by the journals which had so long held him up to the execration of the world.

The statistics which we have just considered, though of somewhat antique date, avail at least to show that, unless the character of the French clergy has undergone a complete transformation, it is very different from what its traducers would have us believe. But we need not restrict ourselves to a period so remote. Since the year 1864 the French Ministry of Justice has published annually a report restricted to charges of a criminal nature, in which professional men are classified under four categories :—

1. The Legal, including barristers, solicitors, notaries, and officers of the courts (*Huissiers*) ;
2. The Artistic ;
3. The Medical, including physicians, surgeons, apothecaries (*Pharmaciens*), and midwives ;
4. The Clerical, including priests and religious of both sexes.

From an analysis of these returns we obtain the following particulars :—

Between 1864 and 1892,—there was in the Legal class 1 criminal conviction annually for every 996 of its members ; in the Artistic, 1 for every 2,958 ; in the

Medical, 1 for every 3,898 ; in the Clerical, 1 for every 23,474.

From 1893 to 1897 there were,—for the Lawyers, 1 conviction yearly per 1,166 ; for the Artists, as in the previous term, 1 per 2,958 ; for the Medicos, 1 per 3,275 ; for the “Clerics,” 1 per 32,154.

From 1897 to 1902 we find, for the Lawyers, 1 per 2,054 ; for the Artists, 1 per 3,802 ; for the Doctors, 1 per 5,474 ; for the “Clerics,” 1 per 33,222.

It is beside our present purpose to inquire what may be the explanation of the marked improvement in the first three classes which these last figures should indicate, an improvement due according to some to the increase of republican virtue, and according to others to the lower standard of public morality favoured by an expurgated magistracy. Thus much is clear, on authority which no one will accuse of any tenderness towards the clerical body, that while the morality of the professional classes generally, as tested in the law-courts, is far above that of any other, the clerical class in particular is beyond comparison the most blameless within its limits. It is likewise clear that these official statistics can by no possibility be reconciled with the “Appalling Record” which has suggested this inquiry. This does not pretend to give a complete list of the offences brought home to clerics, but only of such as are sufficiently nasty for its purpose ; yet, as it stands on the broadsheet the catalogue of clerical condemnations for the years 1897 and 1898 is grossly in excess of the total reached during the same periods by the official record of an anti-clerical Government.

Whatever trustworthy information is to be gleaned in other quarters is always similar in import. Thus, there have been published the statistics of the Court of Appeal for the district of Nancy from 1811 to 1879. The clerical population of the district, it is calculated, must

throughout this period never have fallen below 6,000 ; yet during these sixty-eight years, there are recorded no more than seven clerical condemnations, or little more than one every ten years.

To refute evidence such as the above is obviously no easy matter, nor does it become easier when we proceed to consider the testimonies adduced on the anti-clerical side. Some examples of such testimony must be examined.

In the year 1898 there was published at Rheims a list of clerical scandals for 1897, which professed to be strictly statistical, and was calculated, in the words of its author, to demonstrate once for all that those who brand priests and religious as the worst of criminals state only the simple truth. According to this, there had been within the year in question forty criminal convictions of “clericals.”

The question was, however, immediately taken up by the *Avenir*, a Catholic newspaper of the same city, and the facts thus brought to light are undoubtedly highly instructive. In the first place, the author of the indictment had by no means confined himself to France in his search for materials, but had requisitioned not only the French Colonies but Italy as well. Moreover, he reckoned not only priests and religious, male and female, but likewise ecclesiastical seminarists, ex-religious, church beadle, church choristers, and even the lay manager of a Catholic co-operative association. Thus augmented, the clerical forces in France itself cannot be reckoned at less than half-a-million, and accordingly were all the forty alleged offences committed on French soil, and were they moreover proved to be genuine, we should have no more terrible average of criminality than one scandal for every thousand and more individuals.

Again, in order rightly to estimate such a document we should know not only how the figures were obtained

but also what they mean, and here too there appears to be a good deal to say, for the nature of some of the “scandals” is not what would be gathered from such a description. Thus, amongst those who are included in this black-list, was a priest who when brought into court was found to be insane; and two nuns who had distributed medicine gratuitously were found guilty of a legal offence, that of practising pharmacy without a license. There were, we are assured, other items in the count of no more heinous character.

As we have seen, a certain number of the alleged scandals are imported from Italy, and in regard of such importations it is clearly necessary, and by no means in this instance alone, to be particularly cautious. We are informed by the *Bien Public* of Ghent,<sup>1</sup> that upon investigation of a number of clerical scandals quoted from that country, the convents or monasteries in which offences are said to have been perpetrated, and the persons said to have perpetrated them, have alike proved to be wholly fabulous, having no existence whatever. The same informant adds that there is manifestly a well-organized system for the concoction of such slanders, and that imaginary persons and places are found to be most convenient in practice, as obviating the danger of libel-actions. Also, that the principal purveyor of this garbage is known to be a certain Dr. J. Lipp, a German, who has been eleven times convicted of libel, and who has had to abscond both from his own country and from Rome.

So much for one source of anti-clerical “facts.”

In 1896 another shocking record, even more appalling in character, was spread broadcast in the North of France. According to this, within the space of a single year no less than 240 clerics had been convicted in France of criminal offences, which in 54 instances were of a filthy

character. This, however, need not detain us long, for such an assertion is both shamelessly and preposterously false, as is indeed obvious from the figures already given.

In no single year from 1850 to 1896 did the criminal convictions of clerics, all told, approach one-tenth of the convictions here alleged for immorality alone, while, as we have seen, the average was far lower still.

Beyond this, it is evident that here again, as in the Italian scandals just mentioned, deliberate fabrication has been at work, as is clear from the following instances adduced by the libeller: .

*Brother Raymond, teacher at Commines (Somme): 8 years penal servitude:*

In the Department of Somme there is no such commune as Commines.

*Brother Seraphim, director of the Orphanage of Notre-Dame des Rochers: penal servitude for life:*

There is not in the whole of France any commune or any orphanage called Notre-Dame des Rochers.

*Brother Charles-le-Bon, teacher at Montplaisir (Rhône): 12 years penal servitude.*

There is not in the Rhône, nor elsewhere in France, any such commune as Montplaisir.

*The Abbé Obry, Curé of Raidville (Vosges): penal servitude for life.*

There is no commune in France of this name. So too for *the Abbé Isaac, vicaire at Plangonner (Côtes du Nord)*; for *the Abbé Carre, Curé of Vizelise (Meurthe et Moselle)*; and for *Brother Régis, teacher at Puy de Dôme*—not one of these places exists, either in the Departments named or in any other part of France.

In like manner a pamphlet has been published at Seraing, in Belgium, giving a long list of criminous clerics, which is an invention from beginning to end. The ecclesiastical authorities testify that not one of

those thus denounced is known in the diocese to which he is said to belong.

In another recent instance, a list circulated broadcast by the irreligious press has been made the subject of investigation, with the result that no fewer than fourteen French dioceses are found to know nothing of priests said to belong to them.<sup>1</sup>

One more indictment of the clergy must be mentioned, which might appear to derive authority from its source. This is a so-called statistical record published in 1880 by the well-known M. Paul Bert, who not only had been a Minister of State, but was confessedly a distinguished man of science. But with him, even more than with most of his fellow-politicians, anticlericalism was a passion, and the avowed object of the publication now in question was to refute the conclusions drawn in favour of the hated clerics from the record of which we have spoken as published in 1872. M. Bert's statement covered a little more than eight years, from January, 1871, to April, 1879, during which period, as he declared, there had been 76 convictions of religious (*Congréganistes*), whose total in France he put down as 9,469, whence it evidently followed that the proportion of criminals in their ranks must be large. The smallness of the figure thus assigned to the religious must undoubtedly startle any one who has perused the statistics we have already cited, and it was flatly contradicted by M. Bert himself in a return which he presented at the very same epoch to the Legislative Chambers. Upon this latter occasion his object was to depreciate the merit of religious as school-teachers, and accordingly he argued that the successes undoubtedly achieved by their pupils were not surprising, considering the numbers engaged in the work;—for there were, he said, 5,700 religious persons teaching in state schools, and 18,283 in

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondant*, December 25, 1903, p. 1088.

private schools. That is to say, there were 23,983 *teachers* belonging to a class which he had just declared to comprise in all only 9,469 members. It is self-evident that a man who can play fast and loose in this reckless fashion forfeits all claim to consideration, and that his authority can be accepted by no one who has any regard for truth. It was still more unfortunate for M. Bert that in 1879, the very year preceding the issue of his pretended statistics, an official Government return gave the number of *Congréganistes*, of both sexes, in France and the Colonies, as 135,003, and accordingly, even supposing his record of 76 convictions in over eight years to be correct, the immunity from crime of their members would be proved to be far beyond that of any other class of the community.

But besides this, as we have seen, the official records on this point did not cease with 1872, but cover the whole period of which he speaks, and prove to demonstration that his assertions are mere calumny. In truth, the strength of these slanders is the unwillingness or incapacity of honest men to believe that malice itself can lie with such brazen effrontery. But until this be realized, the actual state of the case cannot be understood.

As M. Bertrin observes, all lists of criminals are branded as suspicious which anticipate the official returns of which we have spoken, or which give the names of the culprits in question: for the said returns furnish the only practical source of information, and they do not give the names, but only the professions, of those against whom charges have been brought or offences proved. Moreover, it is found that, in every case, lists of this description are absolutely contradicted by the official return. M. Bertrin himself, more than three years ago, specifically denounced as mendacious several of these pretended records, and he now tells us

that in no single instance has any attempt been made to refute his facts and figures by any argument more cogent than abuse. Yet these bogus catalogues of clerical scandal had all been industriously disseminated, and in some instances placarded to shock the simple minds of the peasantry.

It is particularly interesting to notice that amongst the spurious documents specifically challenged by M. Bertrin,<sup>1</sup> is the first moiety of our friend the “Appalling Record,” or rather of its main portion, for in its original form it comprised only Brothers belonging to teaching Congregations, and the “Abbots” and Professors of Morality, of whom we now hear, have been provided somewhere else. Yet even in the first and scantier form the list is seen to have been grossly falsified; for whereas it gives for 1897 ten clerical cases, there were in reality but five; and in 1898, instead of eleven convictions, there were but four accusations, one resulting in an acquittal.

As for the statistics of the *Lanterne* for 1902, which the Protestant Press Agency adopts, it will be sufficient to say that when these were given to the world the official record for that year had not yet been published. From this fact we are now in a position to draw our own inferences, which may be supported by yet other examples. Thus, before the issue of the Government returns for 1899, it was loudly proclaimed that twenty-one religious teachers had that year been sentenced and but two secularists, and that accordingly “there were ten-and-a-half times as many crimes committed in schools where God was, as in those where He was not”—a style of language which even the extremest Protestants should find significant. But when the official statistics appeared it was found that the convictions of

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondant*, December 25, 1903, pp. 1082-3.

clericals had been but five, while those of secularist teachers numbered eleven.

Something has been said of the mode in which “clericals” are manufactured for scandalous purposes. A striking instance occurred in connection with the same year, 1899—in the list of its offenders appearing one “Leon—formerly a Brother.” This man had, it is true, been a Brother, but had quitted his habit five-and-twenty years before, had gone over to the hostile camp, had married and become a strenuous worker on the irreligious side. But when he got himself into trouble with the law on the score of immorality, he was quietly labelled *ancien-frère*, and thrust amid the examples of clerical iniquity.

But no example of the lengths to which mendacity is prepared to go can surpass one furnished by a recent performance of the *Action*, the most irreligious of Parisian irreligious journals. In common with other newspapers, this had received through a News Agency particulars concerning an Italian tragedy: a certain Count Bonmatini having been killed by his brother-in-law, Julio Murri. According to the advices received by the *Action*, as by the rest of the press, the homicide and all his family were big folk (*les gros bonnets*) among the Bolognese Freemasons. As rendered by the newspaper this became “were fervent Catholics.” Further it was said that before Murri committed the crime, his father and uncle called upon M. Nathan, Grand Master of Italian Freemasonry, who approved the project, and promised to use his influence with the Lodges there to secure an asylum for the murderer at Athens. According to the *Action*, it was a parish priest—what the Protestant Press Agency would call a curate—whose approval was gained and assistance promised.

Here we may stop for the present. There remains another important field of inquiry, which may be

examined upon another occasion, concerning the means adopted in particular cases to establish charges against individuals ; but it seems better to deal with one point at a time, and that which has now been investigated is sufficiently complete in itself. The facts which have here been given are not now produced for the first time. They have already been brought to the notice of those ardent apostles of truth, the members of the Protestant Press Agency.<sup>1</sup> And how are they met by those who are so solicitous for the moral enlightenment of their countrymen ? In presence of such damning evidence as we have, replies Mr. Le Lievre,<sup>2</sup> "is it worth while discussing the percentage of criminality in various walks of life ?"

That the evidence is damning all honourable men will agree. But it is not against the persecuted French Clergy that its indictment lies.

<sup>1</sup> See an article, "Window-dressing," in the *Tablet* of January 30, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily News*, February 5, 1904.

# FREEMASONS IN FRANCE<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BARRY, D.D.

THE *Revue Maçonnique* of December, 1902, put forward a declaration which may be termed the keynote of all arguments touching the great modern mystery or sect entitled by its members "The Children of the Widow." In this authoritative statement we read:—

"It is certain that Freemasonry is not understood everywhere after the same fashion. The Anglo-Saxons have made of it a brotherhood which is at once aristocratic and Conservative in politics and religion. The Scandinavian group, to which the Prussian belongs, misconstrues the universal character of the institution, and regards it in some sort as a Christian sect from which non-Christians are to be excluded. As for the Latin Freemasonry, it owes its distinctive peculiarities to the battle it is waging against Catholicism. That is the kind which was especially in force at the Congress of Geneva, and there is nothing to hinder it from becoming the centre of a world-wide Masonic Federation."

But, as a matter of fact, the Congress of Geneva, held in 1902, failed entirely to heal the breach existing for some quarter of a century between those "Grand Lodges"—English, American, German, and Australian—which continued to acknowledge the "Architect of the Universe," and those others, chief among them the Grand Orient of France, which, since 1877, had erased that primary article from their creed. The older forms of Masonry were

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from the *National Review*, July, 1905.

humanitarian, of course ; but their dogma, ritual, and language announced a strong belief in Theism. Not so the latest, which is now the only prevailing, Masonry of the French Lodges, whether Grand Orient, Scottish Rite, or "Mixed"—that is to say, partly feminine. If we listen to the orators who express its doctrine, if we consult its legislation, study its works and ways, or pursue it into the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, and the Ministry at Paris, we shall find that it has exchanged a fervent confession of Deity for the loudest of Positive anathemas upon "all religion and all metaphysics." M. Lanessan, lately Minister of Marine, told his brethren in 1881, with an allusion to Voltaire, "We must stamp out the infamous ; but the infamous is not clericalism, it is God." By the year 1891 almost all "Moderates" had fallen away from the Lodges. In 1893 the Convention or general meeting declared that none were eligible for the Council of the Order—which serves as its Executive—unless they had pledged themselves to abstain from all religious rites, they and their dependents. And it has been repeatedly asserted, as by Mayoux and others, that no orthodox believer, Catholic, Protestant, or Jew, could be a sincere Freemason in France.<sup>1</sup> Brother Desmons, formerly a Protestant pastor, afterwards Senator and adorned with every privilege the Order could bestow on him, defined the Republic in 1899 as "anti-military, anti-clerical, and Socialist." But, in another widely-quoted phrase, "the Republic is Masonry under the light of day, and Masonry is the Republic under cover."

This movement always professes to uphold the Rights of Man, to be tolerant, progressive, in love with freedom, averse from violence, and dedicated to philosophy and peace. It has been, since its transformation in 1877 and 1879, increasingly Secularist, above all in its action upon the primary schools of France, which are governed by laws of its framing, and by officials who never can escape from

<sup>1</sup> See Paul Nourisson, *Les Jacobins au Pouvoir* (Paris, Perrin, 1905).

its surveillance or its penalties if they attempt to hold the balance even between French citizens. As a society in essence and temper middle-class, not frequented by persons of high birth (and so extremely unlike the English Lodges), nor opening its doors to mechanics and artizans, it should be Conservative in respect of property. Neither has it captured the leading Socialists, who are too shrewd to accept a master in the disguise of an ally. But of late years the principles known as Collectivism have made disciples all over France. And the Mother Society is hesitating whether to throw in her lot with a party on which the Government is becoming more and more dependent for its lease of power.

In this description witnesses concur from every side. That there is a struggle as for life and death between Catholics and Freethinkers across the Channel, those Englishmen know that are otherwise ignorant of French affairs; and M. Combes, himself a Mason, put into office by Masons, has painted it vividly in the pages of the *National Review*. M. Combes, indeed, calls it a struggle between Catholics and Republicans. But by Republicans he understands, as in the definition given above, members and fautors of his brotherhood. We must not be taken in by such simple devices. The Catholic Church has never condemned any legitimate form of government. Her teaching on this subject is perfectly plain. It was not invented yesterday. The whole of it, as set out by Pope Leo XIII, may be found in St. Thomas Aquinas, who died six hundred and thirty years ago. The present writer was brought up in Rome, at the feet of Roman Cardinals, during the Vatican Council, and when the Syllabus of 1864 was continually under discussion. But the doctrine which he learnt from these august teachers was always the same. It left wide room for Democracy, the Republican *régime*, and political toleration under modern conditions. It is not, therefore, in France a question whether the Republic ought to exist, but how it is to be administered. Even the Legitimist Catholics, who could not endure that

form of government in idea, were willing to submit to it in fact. And unless there be political dogmas to which every citizen must swear assent or suffer for it, what more could be asked of them? But this was the matter in dispute: Shall France be administered in the interest of the majority—some thirty millions who had not absolutely broken with religion—or shall it be exploited by five-and-twenty thousand Freemasons—their numbers all told—Jacobins in theory and practice, the men of 1793 come to life again? Shall there be toleration according to the Rights of Man, which declare that “no citizen is to be molested on account of his religious opinions,” or the other kind of toleration, after the heart of Robespierre—nay, of St. Just—which demands that Christianity be suppressed because it gives offence to Freethinkers?

Such is the head and front of the quarrel—every year growing fiercer—which has almost taken the character of a civil war among Frenchmen. If it is not for strangers to interfere, it may well be their duty to understand. The English love of fair play demands it; perhaps the interest which this great Empire now has in a genuine *entente cordiale* would not lose by it. Britain offers to secure the French colonial possessions by her fleets in return for the steady keeping of the balance of power by France against German encroachments. That is the bargain, as all the world sees it. But how if France had no effective army—nothing but a demoralized and divided service, where no man could reckon on his fellow? What would France be then, within a week after the Germans had begun to pour out from Metz into Champagne? Here the Freemason who was anti-clerical comes before our view as anti-military. He may persecute the Church. Is it safe for him to “compromise” the army? French public opinion thundered that it was not, during the stormy debates of last November and December, and, gathering force as time went on, it has now hurled M. Combes from his bad eminence.

But why should Masons attack the army? Perhaps we

believe it is on account of a great miscarriage of justice, perpetrated by the General Staff during the "Affaire." If we do so imagine, dates and facts will open our eyes to the truth, which is quite another thing, antecedent to Captain Dreyfus, and in no wise connected with his misfortunes. M. Georges Goyau, in his profound historical study, *La Patrie et L'Humanitarisme*, surveys, documents in hand, the whole situation out of which was destined to arise an assault upon French military institutions.<sup>1</sup> It goes back to the ideals of Freemasonry, as well as to the Lodges where they found their most ardent champions. M. Goyau recognizes in Gambetta the man who said of clericalism—that is, the Catholic Church—"Voilà l'ennemi." But he can also prove that this fiery Southern, when he came to organize the national defence, perceived—for he was not in the least an imbecile—that religious or anti-religious faction-fighting must be kept within the civil arena; that to let it invade the barracks or the camp would be fatal. Accordingly, Gambetta drew his cordon round about the army, and Frenchmen, whatever their creed, were advanced to positions of trust by reason of their merits as soldiers.

Gambetta's pupil and most famous, probably most capable heir, was Jules Ferry, the man who proposed by his Clause Seven to 'put down Religious Orders, to exile and impoverish monks and nuns; and so to anticipate M. Combes by twenty years. He did not get his measure adopted; thereupon, by simple decree, the thing was done so far as it could be carried out, and immense misery fell upon thousands of innocent women, while the very name of Jesuit or Benedictine was made a curse. Nevertheless Jules Ferry had learned from his master two lessons: that the army must not be touched, and that anti-clerical laws were not for exportation into the East or the French Colonies. France had won a splendid fame by her protectorate over Christians in the Orient. Her missionaries

<sup>1</sup> Goyau, *L'Idée de Patrie et L'Humanitarisme* (Paris, Perrin, 1903).

were pioneers of civilization ; they carried her flag into regions where it had never been seen. They must be treated with consideration. Something ludicrous there was, if men like Ferry had the wit to see it, in defending abroad ecclesiastics who were denounced as hostile to light and progress at home. Yet these are the facts. Neither Gambetta nor Ferry would run the risk of cutting the military sinews on which the very existence of the country depended. Army and navy were to be indulged if they still believed in God, sought a blessing on their expeditions from the clergy, went to Mass, and wore religious emblems. For who could call in question their loyalty, their courage, or their spirit of self-sacrifice ?

How came these public services to have kept in touch with Christian usages, while so many were falling into indifference or worse ? The answer is not far to seek. In France, more perhaps than elsewhere in countries given over to industry, the national defence had always, even when the middle class ruled, been recruited from nobles and the peasantry. The industrial system creates no zeal for arms, but rather discourages enthusiasm. Between clothyard and sabre the alliance had never been intimate. Now the French *noblesse* were Catholic, not Freethinking ; they sent their children to colleges of the Religious Orders ; they kept on terms of civility or affection with the curé and the bishop. As for the peasantry, neither were they Voltairian, though often indifferent. But they would not give up the Catholic rites ; in many districts, notably along the western sea-coast, they were fervent believers, and from these regions the sailors of France were drawn. All this was natural, we might say inevitable ; it corresponded to the historical development of the country, and exhibited a sort of law. The policy of Rome, the traditions of Jesuits, had little to do with a state of things which we find wherever the French Revolution has left its mark. Since 1789 the "moral unity," which consists in holding the same fundamental principles of life and conduct, is no longer to be perceived in this great country. Catholics and Liberals

are set in array against each other, like the Guelfs and Ghibellines of mediæval Italy. Under such circumstances, what is the duty of Government? Manifestly, to deal out even justice, to leave all careers open to talent, while the law is observed, and to refrain from harassing citizens on account of their speculative opinions. Such, in theory, has ever been the Liberal solution, freedom to associate, to discuss, to live according to one's belief, in a State which is impartial because it is "secular" in aim and object. It is the American method, but it is not the French.

However, these were the persons of the drama. On one side a small but active minority of Jacobins, holding in leash expectant politicians and administrators (zealous only for what they could get), often disowned by their class, doubtful characters, attorneys, little farmers, doctors, restaurant keepers, tradesmen, *piliers d'estaminet*, exactly as in the years of Revolution. They were not always open members of the Lodge: dispensation was even granted them to be seen in church, or to send their families to Mass. But they had all pledged themselves to be Masons while they lived, to execute every behest of superior powers, to spy upon one another, and, if in authority, to be relentless towards every manifestation of Catholic belief. The notorious atheist, Edgar Monteil, whose *Catechism for Freethinkers* preaches fiercely against the supernatural, has laid down a Code to this effect—with full sanction of his comrades—in unmistakeable terms. The Mason's duty is to vote for suppression of religious budgets however allocated, in town, county, or National Assembly; to forbid in every way the appearance and use of Catholic emblems; and, above all, to keep a firm hand upon the schools. But the chief means of arriving at supremacy was to be the "purifying" of public offices from Christians, who must make way as speedily as possible for Masons and their nominees. "L'épuration" has been the rallying-cry of every "Convention" for the last five and-twenty years. In one word, ostracism. Expel Catholics from the administration; let them not hold so much as a licence for salt and tobacco.

Take from them what they have ; make it impossible, by means of diplomas and examinations which their conscience will not suffer them to accept, that they shall enter the public service. "La carrière ouverte aux talents" signifies that Masonic candidates alone are eligible for the million or so of appointments which, in France, constitute the bureaucracy—in plain English, the Government of the land. That is what "l'épuration" means.

On one side, therefore, this handful of intriguers, preaching equality and toleration, but aiming at the conquest of every position in the State. What on the other? All who had no flag except the Republican, but who did not meddle in politics, and who had to struggle for their living. Earnest Catholics, and especially the priests of France, the sisterhoods engaged in works of mercy, the teaching orders, professional men who were not ashamed of their religion, and the old *noblesse*. Between Church and army an alliance, to this extent, could not be avoided, so long as France did not cast out her sons for being orthodox from the ranks of her soldiery. Moreover, it was a rule that secret societies should not recruit in the barracks. Freemasonry found the doors barred ; it might reign in Parliament, but it still had to get the sabre into its grip ; and, while the army lived up to its old traditions, how could that be done ? Masons governed everywhere except at the War Office. They must break the military spirit if the Church was to be put down once for all.

Thus on two distinct lines the conflict went unsteadily but assuredly forward. The humanitarian declaimed against a standing army, the pride of caste, the *ancien régime* entrenched in the Rue St. Dominique under a War Minister's command. The Freethinker insisted that education should be gratuitous, compulsory, and secular, by which he never meant less than the elimination from French training of belief in God. Were these objects achieved, the country would be divided into Catholic helots, without authority or influence, and Freemason masters in possession of honours, emoluments, power, and security. "La liberté,

c'est pour nous," said Gambetta. The spoils should fall to the victors. Bring up one whole generation without Christian ideas, and the "moral unity" of France upon a Jacobin foundation would be secured. The logic of such a plan is unimpeachable; its hypocrisy when it wraps itself up in the Rights of Man hardly requires to be shown.

Proofs in abundance of the statements here made are at hand in piles of documents. Not a single assertion I have set down is taken from Catholic sources. They may all be read in Masonic Bulletins, *Comptes Rendus*, and the like, which though not intended for circulation—nay, though printed "under the secret" contrary to law—have been dragged into the light. In 1902 what we should call a Blue Book on Freemasonry was published by M. Prache, Deputy of the Seine, giving us the first act of that remarkable drama, not yet concluded, over which France went into a white heat this last winter—the assault of the Lodges on army and navy.<sup>1</sup>

A petition covered by more than eighty thousand signatures had gone before Parliament, declaring that the Masonic Society was "unauthorized, secret, and illegal," pointing out the laws which it broke, and asking, not for its suppression, but that it should be compelled to observe the statutes. This document was referred to a Committee, and M. Prache became its "reporter." His voluminous report, founded entirely on Masonic papers, went into the story from 1877 down to the time of the petition. It took account of the new law touching associations which M. Waldeck-Rousseau had drawn up since the Commission was appointed. And it gave weighty reasons in detail for deciding that the Lodges were "unauthorized, secret, and illegal," on evidence derived from the Masons themselves. The Commission adopted M. Prache's report, presented their own to the Ministers, and made a request that the law should be put in motion. Nothing came of all this. For there were eight or nine Masons in the Cabinet, besides

<sup>1</sup> *La Pétition contre la Franc-Maçonnerie, &c. Exposé par M. Prache (Paris, 1902).*

others who held the highest offices of State. And, though M. Prache had found out many strange things, he did not know that General André, the War Minister, had already begun to purify the army in concert with the Grand Orient of the Rue Cadet. That undesigned confirmation of the allegations made by M. Prache was yet to be revealed before the eyes of an astonished and scandalized world.

The schoolmaster and the soldier, these two pillars of society, Jachin and Boaz, the Lodges were resolved to make their own. Liberals had once been suspicious of the omnipotent State; free education was their ideal. But now they clamoured for the State monopoly of all teaching whatsoever. We should bear in mind that France, ever since the time of Napoleon, had only one University, Paris, which controlled the schools on a uniform plan with absolute power, down to the year 1850. At that time, thanks to Montalembert's efforts, the right of private teaching was in a certain measure restored. Let us understand precisely how much this implies. The State went on providing its own establishments. It did not contribute one penny to any other. But it graciously allowed Catholics, who were the chief parties concerned, to open schools of their own, to support them, and to invite scholars if they chose to come. Such was the "aggression" which the teaching orders might attempt at their own expense. Under the Third Republic, "Free" Universities have been set up on the same terms.

That these Catholic institutions answer a national demand is proved by their constant success, and by the fact that more than half the French scholars were attending them until the recent suppression. They had no legal status, no grant from public funds, and of course no power to compel attendance. But they did more than compete with Government primary schools, lycées, and even with the École Normale. Their pupils took degrees, entered the army and navy, won distinction in spite of all the Government did to cross and disqualify them. The Christian Brothers are, perhaps, the best masters of primary and

secondary schools in Europe or America. But they cost the State nothing. The Jesuits, true to their ancient fame, were admirable in conducting public schools; their establishment in the Rue des Postes was an open door through which Catholics entered the army with *éclat* and proved themselves trained officers. In point of education the Lodges are deplorably inferior. One reason why we cannot quote them much verbatim is that their speeches and documents abound in bad French, windy and pretentious, like that of Robespierre, but so empty as to make us wonder how any man attends their Convention a second time. They represent the lowest section of the bourgeoisie. Here again was a motive, by no means unimportant, for opposing the cultivated masters who adorned religion as nobly as they upheld the classic tradition of letters. They were genuine champions of free education. Hence the State must be provoked to jealousy, its powers employed to ruin the private establishments that covered France, and a "moral-unity" manufactured by virtue of the Mandarin system which Taine had proved to be a curse and a hindrance to French prosperity. But the Jacobin does not want a free and progressive France: he wants the centralized machine that he can drive, the Committee of Public Salvation that he knows how to coerce. In appealing to lawyers and bureaucrats he is always successful when he harps on this customary string. Catholics, on the other hand, have discovered that only by the law of freedom can they escape a tyranny as monstrous as that of Philip the Fair or Louis XIV, but without excuse in a democratic modern State.

For a quarter of a century the propaganda which strikes at what is known as the Law Falloux has gone on, led by M. Jean Macé, founder of the "League of Teaching," most ardent and unconcealed of Freemasons. Were that law abolished, neither man nor woman from Cherbourg to Marseilles could teach the A B C to half a dozen children without Government permit. And such permit would be refused not only to members of Religious Orders, as it is at

this moment wherever lay teachers can be got ; it would be taken from the secular clergy themselves, by this manœuvre imprisoned in their pulpits and silenced six days out of seven. Be it never overlooked that in State schools teachers are bound, first, not to utter the name of God or let it be read even in a fable ; but second, not to have religious books of any sort in their possession ; and third, not to darken the door of a church. These atheistic rules, planned and executed by direct commission from the Lodges, have been sometimes evaded, but are enforced by severe penalties. There is no question of freedom for the unhappy teachers. By such methods of a Russian ferocity, and others that space will not allow us to recapitulate, the League of M. Jean Macé boasts of having within its toils seven hundred and fifty thousand French children, with masters and mistresses, all "secularized." No greater victory has been won by the Masons, who glory in it as their contribution to a new France. When we look at the statistics of child-crime and youthful outrages on persons and property, we recognize what the Lodges are doing. Their code of benevolence does not make up for the loss of the Catechism. Secularist morals are verbiage ; and the never-ceasing war upon religion in all its forms has told in favour of anarchy. No matter, provided freedom be denied to Catholics. "We must not allow," said Brother Souchet in the Convention of 1898, "that any who live at cost of the Republic shall send their children to the Jesuits." Masons had formerly been liberty men ; they were so no longer. Discipline required that they should vote for all measures, however absolute, which would keep Christians down. In public their candidates talked another language, especially when soliciting the suffrages of districts not yet enlightened. By such tactics they were returned to Parliament, in which, as M. Blatin declared, there was "a veritable syndicate of Masons." M. Prache observes that double-meaning of this kind is fatal in Democracy. But we must register the undoubted fact. Masons are permitted to distinguish out of doors between "clericalism" and

“Catholicism”; they are not to recognize one another in public lest suspicion be excited; they may conform to the “superstition” they loathe in order to undermine it; they are governed by *Monita Secreta* without appeal to law, and if recalcitrant may be denounced to every Lodge in the country, and so boycotted and ruined.

As for Ministers and Deputies, their situation is yet more extraordinary. In September, 1891, it was proposed that these Masons should come when sent for by the Grand Orient, wearing their “regalia,” to the temple, and there receive instructions, “under the Masonic form,” as apprentices of the lowest rank. Such a meeting was held at the Rue Cadet in 1895. The session was with closed doors; the President, as a sort of Pope, laid his mandate on the freely-elected representatives of France, assembled *ad audiendum verbum*; and that mandate determined how laws should be drawn up and passed. There are those who call the French Church an *Imperium in Imperio*. What shall we term this hidden irresponsible power to which, as its leaders triumphantly affirm, the laws of divorce, of education, of cremation, of compulsory service, and all others that vex religion or menace private Christians, are due? From whom did M. Combes receive his instructions, then? If we are to believe the addresses sent up to him by the Lodges, he, like M. Waldeck-Rousseau, depended on them for his exalted place, and it is plain that he was carrying out their designs to the letter. Had he not obeyed, he would have been speedily flung aside. In 1892 M. Lombard was Deputy for the Isère, and member of the Masonic Council. He voted for the *Budget des Cultes*, and was at once deprived of his Masonic honours. What need that signify? it may be asked. It signifies as much, we reply, as excommunication did in the Middle Ages. Hence the frantic anxiety of those who are censured by their Lodge to get back into favour. They submit to penance, and are lucky to be forgiven on terms which leave them a chance of recovering their lost status. The “Widow” has a long arm; without violence or clamour she can teach rebellious children how profitable

it is to do as they are told. Thus by every kind of motive she keeps them docile. M. Combes was simply obedient when he suppressed five hundred Religious Orders and seized their property wherever found.

But her one all-powerful means is the spy system. Every Mason when he is initiated submits to it in all his doings, "profane" no less than "sacred." He undertakes to give account of others whom he sees engaged in mischief; he promises inviolable secrecy as regards all that goes on within the tent. After the "great Convention" of 1894 this correspondence, hitherto scattered and desultory, was put on an entirely new footing. The prime agent was Lucipia, a returned Communist who had undergone penal servitude; and the season appeared to call for vigorous measures. Catholics, under guidance of Leo XIII, had been "rallying" to the Republic; it was possible that, if unchecked, they might come into power. Immense as was their majority in France, they had not seen a Catholic President or Prime Minister at the head of affairs since Marshal MacMahon resigned. Atheism had been the order of the day. But, if the elections were not tampered with, if voting were really free, at last they might hope to breathe again. The Lodges took instant alarm. Remark, once more, that the "Affaire" was not yet in existence. Various temples, in particular that of L'Equerre at Paris, had resounded with invectives against a high-born General Staff; pleas for the common soldier had been put into print; universal peace was a favourite subject of lecturers. But the danger apprehended at that moment was political. Accordingly, Lucipia proposed secret-service money, to be employed at headquarters; and at first he did not persuade the brethren. They wanted more light. It was reluctantly vouchsafed. The "archives" needed completion. Blatin implored them to inquire no further; an "instrument of defence and combat" was necessary, which not even in the Convention ought to be described. The resolution passed.

But Brother Dequaire, at the banquet afterwards, could not hold his tongue. "There was to be a central bureau

of information," he said, "a very exact agency of *renseignements*." The *Officina delatorum* was set up. Next year the Lodges were invited to send what they knew regarding the schools of the Congregations and the execution of the Army Laws. Some natural hesitation was felt, and though Bouglé in 1897 cried out, "Give names, unmask the Deputies who are traitors," while in 1898 St. Auban proposed to make out lists of all "salaried" persons for the like object, still Frémiot called such proceedings *un rôle policier*, and asked why they should spy on people that did not belong to them? He was put down indignantly and compelled to apologize. Every Lodge now took up the task of "national defence." The new Inquisition spread all over France, and an amazing series of events followed. Except during the Jacobin Terror, when the "law of suspects" was in force, a parallel to them will hardly be found in modern times.

For years the Lodges had been seeking an occasion to attack the French army. It was given when the "Affaire" had shown how a General Staff could lose its head during a crisis. We remember that the nation, rightly or wrongly, agreed with the sentence which degraded Captain Dreyfus, and with the verdict of the Second Court at Rennes. This circumstance throws a curious light on the relative numbers of Masons and of their adversaries; for had the majority of Frenchmen been at one with "Mason Lodge," things would have turned out otherwise than they did, and the accused, whether condemned or acquitted, would have become a popular hero. But there was now a chance without example to "purify" the high military grades. Furious lectures denouncing militarism were given in such numbers that the mere titles and contents of brochures relating to them fill fifty-eight pages of the *Dossiers Maçonniques*, from which we shall be quoting presently. "L'Armée contre la Nation" was the device, employed by Urbain Gothier, under which these diatribes appeared. Charges of tyranny and torture, illustrated by the magic lantern, were repeatedly heard, even from the lips of officers, who

now formed no insignificant part of the Lodges, though commonly subalterns, and, as events were to show, eager for prompt advancement. "Les supplices militaires" was a headline not seldom printed, and a new thing in France, which had looked upon its army as the one "national defence" that could be trusted in the day of battle.

General Billot, the War Minister, had exclaimed in Parliament during the session of 1897 that a Catholic who was a Republican need be neither Mason nor Jesuit. The Lodges took up this challenge and turned it round. They were resolved that no Catholic, whatever he called himself, should be an officer. "Le sabre aux républicains éprouvés," said Brother L. Buisson, Commissaire de la Marine, at a meeting in 1901. Brother Morel, the same year, reporting to the General Assembly, brought up a string of resolutions which demanded compulsory service of two years in the ranks for all, abolition of courts-martial in time of peace, the secularizing of hospitals, dismissal of chaplains, and putting an end to the officer's pecuniary interest in his grade. In 1904, the Parisian Lodge, L'Avenir, published a pamphlet, *L'Armée*, which gives with entire frankness and according to the philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer the sum of changes thought desirable. Nothing could be more instructive. Whatever sets the army apart from the civilian is to be done away. Separate military jurisdiction (the Mutiny Act, we say in England) is no longer to be recognized. Full uniform, medals, decorations, music, even the officers' mess, are to be put down. No army surgeon, no sentries for ornament, no workshops, to be permitted. The Secretary for War is to be supreme over the whole army. Appointments are to be made by the Cabinet, without reference to Generals. Instead of a standing army there is to be a district militia, trained and disciplined by its own subalterns. And the sword is never to be worn off service. These proposals, astonishing in a country like France, have been incessantly repeated from platforms, in widely scattered tracts, in local newspapers, and make up the deliberate programme to

which Freemasonry is committed. The old Jacobin idea of a "citizen army" and "national guard" inspires them from beginning to end. If we call to mind that it was the Paris National Guard which began the Commune, and which fought or fled from the army of Versailles, all manner of strange affinities glance out upon us. The Mason programme, with its local militia, would afford a sorry defence against Teutons marching westward. But its exponents were quite serious. The army, despite Gambetta and Jules Ferry, was to be thrown into the furnace of politics. Who should undertake this revolution? General André was the instrument, but the real author was the Grand Orient, situated in the Rue Cadet, which gave its orders to the Rue St. Dominique.

Here begins the marvellous story of *les fiches*.<sup>1</sup> It has convulsed France, startled foreigners, and flung into the middle of the street Masonic mysteries by the score. General André, sent in to "purify" the regiments, did not know how to act until he had got special and detailed information concerning the officers. He first applied to an agency, "L'Assurance Générale," but the newspapers caught scent of it, a scandal was beginning, and he took to covert. As had always been intended, his inquiries were drawn to the headquarters of Masonry. The "Maffia," of which he was in quest, had been flourishing there since 1894. It was managed at this time by three secretaries, under the President. Of these M. Vadecard was the chief, but, as it turned out, M. Bidegain was the most important. Hitherto the sleuth-hounds had been tracking doubtful politicians. They were now put on the military trail. This brilliant idea is attributed to M. le Commandant Pasquier, Venerable of the Lodge Voltaire, who soon rose to much higher rank, was made governor of the prison of Cherche Midi, and subsequently Colonel. He became an ardent informer, and himself sent up "notes" on as many as fifty-three regiments. But, as the story-book says, let us not anticipate.

<sup>1</sup> *Dossiers Maçonniques—La Franc-Maçonnerie contre l'Armée*, par Paul Fesch (Paris, Clavreul, 1905).

We are only at July 20, 1901, when Vadecard, at request of General André (forwarded through Captain Mollin, his aide and a brother of the craft), issued the circular with which began, as M. Guyot de Villeneuve said in Parliament, "a vast brigandage." The circular was despatched to the Venerables of all French Lodges. M. Pasquier and his confederates proposed to found an association of all Masonic officers, which they called "La Sol . . . Mer . . .", meaning thereby "La solidarité militaire." This was to be an army within the army, and it implied the sifting of the corn from the chaff. To that end a number of questions were written down, printed, and posted, dealing with each officer's pedigree, schools in which trained, societies to which belonging, religious practices of himself, wife, and children; schools to which his children were sent, relations at large, and whether he was an anti-Semite? The military qualifications of the person to be tracked did not come into review. But the "Great Inquest" was open.

It proceeded by double entry. As the informers sent up their reports, signed or anonymous, M. Vadecard and his helpers sorted them, had copies taken from which all Masonic indications were carefully omitted, and communicated these documents to Captain Mollin, keeping back and storing the originals in the Rue Cadet. M. Bidegain, who seems from the first to have had views of his own, also took copies, but did not mention the fact to his superiors at the Grand Orient. The War Office, under Mollin, who also had his secretaries, made no distinction between signed or unsigned reports, but treating them as of equal value, had them put into cipher when they were classified and annotated. They were divided, by religious heads, into one book named "Corinth," which held the Freemasons and their allies, and another named "Carthage," where all supposed Catholics found their resting-place. Captain Mollin summed up the values, marked them in the *fiches*, and had these ready for General André's inspection when changes or promotions were about to be made. The work set going was carried on, without a

break, from July, 1901, to September, 1904. Three orderlies were kept busy upon it day after day during those many months. As for the Grand Orient, its correspondence rose in 1903 to over a quarter of a million letters annually. In six years it had much more than doubled. M. Vadecard, whose "habitual devotion" won the plaudits of General André, was gazetted, on January 13, 1903, to the Legion of Honour, for "distinguished services in the press." But M. Vadecard had not sought distinction that way. He was Chief of the Delation Office, and so merited from M. Combes the cross which M. Wilson, under a previous ruler of State, had sold to the highest bidder.

Among the Council of the Order many informers were found. No fewer than twenty-four, whose names are given, attended the Convention eleven years ago, at which Lucipia secured its endowment for the spy system. Though not a spy, M. Doumer was present and voted at that meeting—M. Doumer, who is now, thanks to the outburst of French indignation, President of the Chamber which could not prevent General André from resigning his portfolio and M. Combes from following his example. M. Doumer, it may be presumed, is still a Freemason. But to continue. It has been reckoned by *L'Intransigeant* that more than 18,000 officers—above 10,000 in the infantry alone—were incriminated at the War Office on denunciations received from the Grand Orient. It is known that there were at least 12,000 *dossiers* in existence when the storm broke last September. Every part of the country supplied them; and it is painful to reflect that among the *casseroles* or "sneaks" were officers who did not scruple at the basest defamation, and who took to themselves the spoils of the vanquished. Jacquot, formerly Commandant, since Lieutenant-Colonel, one of whose reports has been photographed in the *Dossiers Maçonniques*, is said to have sent up 500. Others were zealous on the same loyal errand. They knew all it entailed. An officer who was inscribed for "Carthage" might as well resign his commission. Be his merits as a soldier never so eminent, he was marked below the line, described by

Captain Mollin as “très mauvais,” and kept in the least favourable quarters, or despatched to Central Africa.

What was his offence? The *fiche* told you *sans phrase*. Either he went to Mass, or allowed his wife and daughters to attend a religious ceremony, or had his children brought up in a Catholic school, or was related to a Legitimist family by blood or marriage. If he practised his faith openly, encouraged his men to do likewise, or read them a lecture on the crime of suicide, he gave still deeper umbrage. Captain Mollin wrote opposite his name, “à rayer impitoyablement.” No matter how many years he had served, or what his distinctions, he saw young men pass over his head by dozens, whose merit was their “proved Republican sentiments.” Thus Colonel Murion, “passing for a Chouan” in these reports, was razed out of the catalogue for promotion, and a *hundred* junior colonels named Generals, while he was retired. A man might never have expressed any political opinions, but that would not save him. The question was, Did he or his wife appear in church from sincere motives of belief? For if he were only dissembling and a Freethinker all the while, he had leave to play the hypocrite—“Corinth” would then receive him with open arms. All this would sound incredible if reported by Catholics. But it stands in black and white, photographed, accessible for days to every one who bought a newspaper on the boulevards. It is now reproduced in facsimile for the edification of times to come, and is so patent that no Freemason ventures to call in question one word of it.

During four years the conspiracy went on. How much did M. Combes know concerning it? How far was he responsible? We are not left in the dark on that head. M. Waldeck-Rousseau on December 24 and 30, 1902, made a memorandum with his own hand which tells us all we require. He had learnt in September from Captain Humbert that something was on foot between the Lodges and the War Office. But on December 24th General Percin, chief of André’s “Cabinet,” told him the case as it stood, and, like an honourable man, proposed to send in his resig-

nation. Waldeck-Rousseau thought he must not do that ; but advised him to keep his hands clean, and called the use of private denunciation "blameworthy and inadmissible." On the 30th he saw M. Combes, cross-examined him, found that he knew in general what was going forward, and warned him that when it became public there would be an explosion. M. Combes agreed, undertook to put the thing down after the elections to the Senate, and went his way. Instead of putting it down, he employed his private secretary to get information at the Grand Orient. Such is M. Combes' *dossier*, in the handwriting of M. Waldeck-Rousseau, or in that of Captain Mollin.

But they were reckoning without M. Bidegain. It was not likely that so large a band of informers, drawn from such a class, would be always discreet. Private vengeance in many districts could not but betray its action. The singular promotions made would tell their own tale. And the officers who found themselves passed over in spite of strong recommendations from their chiefs, or their distinguished military service, began to ask why they were left for years in a position of obscurity. An uneasy feeling grew, as when storms are approaching. In the lobbies of Parliament knowing signals were exchanged. It struck M. Bidegain that now or never was the time to make merchandise of all the originals he could lay hands upon. He went to certain *entrepreneurs*, sold his documents, and fled. The secret was in open market. September, 1904, will be a fatal month in the annals of Freemasonry.

The *Matin*, which is not a clerical organ, sent up by way of rocket an inquiry touching a young lieutenant of the military school of St. Maixent. On September 25th it wrote of "espionage in the army." On the 29th it repeated the charge, gave some frightful instances, and, addressing General André, said, "Burn your *fiches*, throw your registers to the winds, put all that corruption in the fire." General André made no sign. Then the *Figaro* took up its parable. There was to be an interpellation in the Chamber by Colonel Rousset. On October 27th an article signed "Vidi"

began to make disclosures. M. Lasies had said point-blank to the War Minister, "I am not defending the honour of these officers, I am attacking yours!" Then M. Calmette, editor of the *Figaro*, in a signed article, sketched the whole history, named some of the informers, and gave documents. On October 28th M. Guyot de Villeneuve, Deputy of the Seine, armed at all points, delivered his great accusing speech, quoting letter after letter from the actual papers, until General André was compelled to rise and speak. The War Minister pretended ignorance, talked of energetic measures, and covered himself with confusion. On October 30th, two documents appeared in the *Figaro*. The first was dated June 21, 1901, was signed by Mollin, addressed to Vadecard, and began, "The General charges me to ask if you will kindly procure information about Col. Vieillard. . . . It is for a very important post, Director of Engineers at Paris. It will never do to put there one of those terrible Republicans trained by the Jesuits or any of their sort." The second letter was signed by Lieut.-Colonel Hartmann. He told General André that it was no use pretending ignorance. The General had been acquainted with the *fiches* since 1902, and Mollin was his deputy for that department.

Day after day witnessed the publication in the Paris journals of lists which contained the names of informers and victims side by side. The *fiches* were reproduced in facsimile by many newspapers. And the horrible indictment did not pause until a catalogue of spies, which covers one hundred and forty pages of *Dossiers Maçonniques*, had been scattered over France. There were some feeble apologies, a few denials; but the record is intact. The Ministry had been saved on October 28th by four votes. On November 4th it must have fallen, had not M. Syveton, at the moment when the President was putting to the vote a resolution by M. Jaurès, assaulted General André, and given it by his violence a majority of 107. But General André was compelled to resign without a word of defence. Another Freemason, M. Berteaux, succeeded him—remark-

able testimony to the power of the Grand Orient over its slaves of the Ministry—though all France was seething with indignation and revolt. The Cabinet of M. Combes had been struck to the heart. It fell, and in its place we see the Cabinet of M. Rovier, likewise a Mason. But enough. We have now only to sum up this bad business in the words of the *Figaro*, which express what the conscience of a great and sorely tried nation feels with regard to it:—

“It is time” (says the *Figaro*) “to fix responsibilities where they ought to be. We have said that the interests of the army were sacrificed from first to last. We have demonstrated that Freemasons of Lodges the most obscure, that officers, discontented or ambitious, in the lowest grades, that sergeants disobedient to their major, anonymous informers, prefects, magistrates in correspondence not with their legitimate chiefs but with the Grand Orient, clean against their duty—that all who aimed at creating an army without ideals, enthusiasm, honour, or conscience—set themselves up as informers day by day with General André. We have shown that M. Vadecard, great judge of the army, registered secret notes sent without responsibility by the pork-butchers of the sub-prefect affiliated to the ‘Acacia.’ We have proved that the Minister’s Cabinet, under direction of Captain Mollin and of Commandant Bernard, presided over this work of inquisition, which went as far as to relatives of the officers themselves. And we have established by a hundred proofs that, on the strength of these *fiches* abounding in rancour, envy, intellectual baseness, the War Office excommunicated, expelled, razed out, and finished the officer under suspicion without giving him a chance of defending himself. The Ministry of War is a ministry of delation. Advancement is mechanically regulated by the simple inspection of these astounding *fiches* which are treated as reports, and which comprise the informations of Masonry, the delations of spies, and the calumnies of men who will not sign them. Those *fiches*, the existence of which General André denied before the Chamber, General André has constantly and exclusively used.”

But the power behind General André was the Grand Orient. And these are the Freemasons who rule France.

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